

MANORAMA

Tell Me Why

KNOWLEDGE MAGAZINE FOR CHILDREN

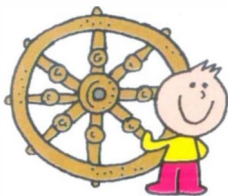
HERITAGE SITES IN INDIA

100 + Facts about UNESCO World Heritage Sites



UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India

- Agra Fort
- Ajanta Caves
- Ellora Caves
- Taj Mahal
- Monuments at Mahabalipuram
- Sun Temple, Konarak
- Kaziranga National Park
- Keoladeo National Park
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary
- Churches and Convents of Goa
- Fatehpur Sikri
- Monuments at Hampi
- Monuments at Khajuraho
- Elephanta Caves
- Chola Temples
- Monuments at Pattadakal
- Sundarbans National Park
- Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks
- Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi
- Humayun's Tomb
- Qutb Minar and its Monuments
- Mountain Railways of India
- Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodhi Gaya
- Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka
- Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus
- Red Fort Complex
- The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur



MANORAMA

Tell Me Why

From the house of MAGIC POT, MANORAMA YEAR BOOK, VANITHA, THE WEEK &
THE MALAYALA MANORAMA DAILY

July 2012

Volume: 6 No: 10

Title No: 70

The Panorama of India's Past

Each of our ancient, historic monuments is a window to the rich heritage of our past. Let us hear what one of our greatest, and most imaginative minds had to say about such great sites.

"At Sarnath, near Benares, I could almost see the Buddha preaching his first sermon, and some of his recorded words would come like a distant echo to me, through two thousand five hundred years. Ashoka's pillars of stone, with their inscriptions, would speak to me in their magnificent language, and tell me of a man who, though an emperor, was greater than any king or emperor".

*- Jawaharlal Nehru in
'The Discovery of India'*



This issue of Tell Me Why gives you splendid, panoramic views of the stunning World Heritage sites in India listed by UNESCO.

To subscribe to Tell Me Why www.manoramaonline.com/subscribe

For subscription enquiries: **1800 4255 002** (Toll-free)
(between 9 am & 5 pm on working days)

M.M. Publications Ltd.,
P.B. No. 226, Ettayam, Kerala, India.
Pin - 686 001.

Phone: 0481 - 2563721 - 22, 23

Fax: ++91-481 - 2564393

E mail: subscription@mmp.in

childrensdivision@mmp.in

NEW DELHI: Malayala Manorama Co. Ltd.,
Andhra Vanitha Mandali Building,
2, Azad Bhavan Road, Indraprastha Estate,
New Delhi - 110 002.

Phone: 011-23379718, 23379719, 23379720

MUMBAI: Malayala Manorama,
A- 404 Marathon Innova, A Wing 4th Floor,
Lower Parel (West), Mumbai- 400 013.

Phone: 022 - 39495969, 24900844, 24901331

KOLKATA: Malayala Manorama,
14 Parasar Road, Near Lake Market,
Kolkata - 700 029.

Phone: 033 - 24198233, 24198048

PATNA: Malayala Manorama,
608, Jagat Trade Centre, Frazar Road,
Patna - 800 001. Phone: 0612 - 2233809

JAIPUR: Malayala Manorama,

C/o Royal business Centre, Usha Plaza, Near
Jaipur Tower, M.I. Road, Jaipur - 302 001.

Phone: 0141 - 2368360, Mob: 9461628972

HYDERABAD: Malayala Manorama,
C/o Dr. B.C. Mathur 8-2-629/1/B, Road
No.12, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 500 034.

Phone: 040 - 23314168, 23324692

BENGALURU: Malayala Manorama,
No. 132, Kantha Court, 3rd Floor,
Lal Baugh Road, Bengaluru- 560 027.
Phone: 22247735 / 36

CHENNAI: Malayala Manorama,
Unit B III Floor, 23, Spur Tank Road, Chetput,
Chennai-600 031. Phone: 044 - 43181405.

COIMBATORE: Malayala Manorama,
101, Sunshine Buildings, 1056,
Avinashi Road, Coimbatore - 641 018.

Phone: 2241911 / 2245470

LUCKNOW: Malayala Manorama,
B-1657, Indira Nagar, Lucknow-226 016.
Phone: 0522 - 2341576

CHANDIGARH: Malayala Manorama,
H No. 2252, Ground Floor Annexe, Sector
21-C, Chandigarh -160 022.

Phone: 0172 - 2724699 Mob: 09417310727

BHOPAL: Malayala Manorama,
Plot No.161, Gopal Bhawan, Zone 1,
M.P. Nagar, Bhopal. Phone: 0755 - 2557937

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:

Malayala Manorama, P.B. No. 160,
Thampanoor East, Thiruvananthapuram-
695001. Phone: 2328198

KOCHI: Malayala Manorama,
P.B. No. 5008, Panampilly Nagar,
Kochi - 682 036, Kerala.
Phone: 0484 - 2316285

UNESCO HERITAGE SITES

Why is heritage called a gift from the past to the future?

Heritage is something that is passed down to us from our forefathers. In this respect, heritage is a gift from past generations to future generations. In the case of families, heritage can be property, possessions, or a tradition. When we speak of a country's heritage, we are referring to its history, achievements, and culture. The term 'World Heritage Sites' is used to refer to those treasures of the past and wonders of nature that are so unique that all the nations of the world have a duty to protect them, irrespective of the country that they are located in. The World Heritage sites reflect the cultural and natural wealth and diversity of our planet.



The UNESCO has so far identified 28 places in India as Heritage sites and many others are awaiting approval.

Why did UNESCO start the World Heritage Centre?

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre was born by merging two separate movements. The first was a movement for the preservation of cultural sites. The second was a movement that dealt with the conservation of nature. The ball for the first

movement was set rolling with the decision to build the Aswan High Dam in Egypt. This dam would have flooded the valley in which one of the treasures of ancient Egypt- the Abu Simbel temple- was located. In 1959, UNESCO launched a campaign to safeguard these temples. It was a joint effort of 50 countries, and it led to many other similar projects to safeguard rare treasures. It was the United States that led the movement to combine the conservation of natural wonders along with cultural sites.



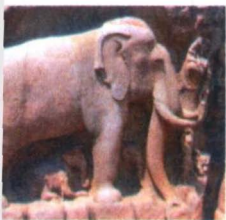
The Stone Chariot at Vitthala Temple, Hampi.

I am searching for some heritage sites...



How many World Heritage sites are there today?

There are 936 World Heritage sites today. They include 725 cultural sites, 183 natural sites, and 28 sites that are a combination of the two. These sites are found in 153 places all over the world. The first two sites in India that made the list were the Agra Fort and the Ajanta Caves. Over the years, 26 more sites have been added. Of the total of 28 sites in India, 23 are cultural sites, and the remaining 5 are natural wonders. The latest site to make the list is the Jantar Mantar in Jaipur.



Curious Fact

World Heritage Fund

In 1972, the World Heritage Fund was created. Its aim is to assist nations in identifying, preserving, and promoting World Heritage sites. Contributions to the fund are made both on a compulsory and voluntary basis. Compulsory contributions are one percent of their annual UNESCO dues. Voluntary contributions must be paid on a regular basis, at least every two years.





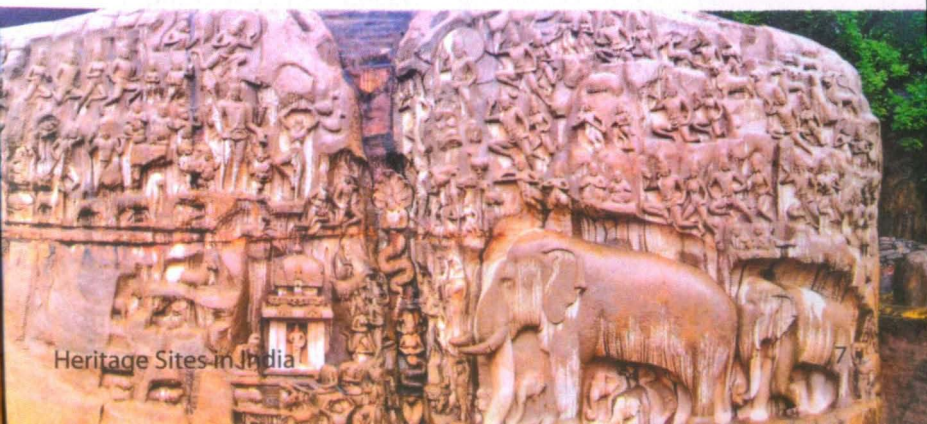
Nomination Process

How does a site become a World Heritage site? To be eligible for nomination as a World Heritage site, the place or cultural landmark must be located within the boundaries of those countries that have signed the World Heritage Convention. Only these nations are eligible to apply for a World Heritage site.

Why is the formation of a tentative list important?

If a country wants a property to be recognized as a World Heritage site, it must have signed the World Heritage Convention. The next step is to submit a tentative list. The tentative list is an inventory of the important natural and cultural heritage sites that are located within the boundaries of that particular country. The tentative list is more than an inventory though. It is a forecast of the properties that the countries might consider for nomination in the next five to ten years. It can be updated at any time. The tentative list is important because only those sites on this list will be considered for nomination as a World Heritage site.

*Sculptures
at
Mahabalipuram*





Agra Fort

Why is the Agra Fort considered an important part of India's heritage?

The city of Agra in Uttar Pradesh has a history that goes back more than 2500 years. It is famous for two magnificent monuments- the Taj Mahal, and the Red Fort of Agra- that reflect the grandeur of the Mughals. The Red Fort of Agra, or the Agra Fort as it is usually called, is located about 2.5 kms from the Taj Mahal. It was the imperial city of several Mughal rulers, and contained many priceless treasures. Did you know that the famous diamond that is now known as the Kohinoor diamond was a part of this treasure? This fort of red sandstone is actually a walled city enclosing many palaces, audience halls, and two mosques. There are four gates on its four sides, and one of the gates was called 'khizri-gate' or the water gate, because it opens to the river front. The fort has survived through the onslaught of time, nature and men, and is today a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Tell Me Why



Fort for Freedom

The Agra Fort was the site of an important battle in the Indian rebellion against British rule in 1857.

It was this rebellion that marked the beginning of India's movement for Independence.

Sir, may I arrange a trip from the Red Fort to the Taj?



Jehangiri Mahal

Why is the history of Agra Fort fascinating?

Agra Fort was originally a brick fort built by the Rajputs, the Hindu kings who ruled the land. Later, the first Sultan of Delhi, Sikander Lodi shifted to Agra, and lived in the fort. It was during this time that Agra became important as the second capital. His son Ibrahim Lodi held the fort for nine years, until he was defeated and killed in the battle of Panipat in 1526 by the Mughal ruler Babur. However, it was Akbar who made Agra the capital of the Mughal Empire and who rebuilt the fort. It was rebuilt in red sand stone, and 1,444,000 builders worked on it for eight years. It was completed in 1573. Akbar's grandson, Shah Jahan, also made some changes to this fort. Shah Jahan was later imprisoned, and it is believed that he died in a tower in Agra Fort that had a view of his masterpiece, the Taj Mahal.



Why is the Agra Fort a blend of Hindu and Mughal architecture?

Agra Fort is spread out over 94 acres, with walls that are 21 metres high. The river runs alongside, and it has four gates built of red sandstone. Delhi Gate is the grandest of the gates that faces the city on the western side. It is embellished with inlay work in white marble, and has a wooden drawbridge that spans a moat. The other important gate is the Lahore Gate, which is also known as the Amar Singh Gate. At one time, there were five hundred exquisitely designed buildings inside the fort. Some of them were demolished by Shah Jahan, and replaced with palaces of white marble. Usually, Islamic architecture has decorations limited to calligraphy and patterns. The Agra Fort however, is an interesting blend of Hindu and Mughal architecture as there are images of dragons, animals, and birds, as well.



Peacock Throne

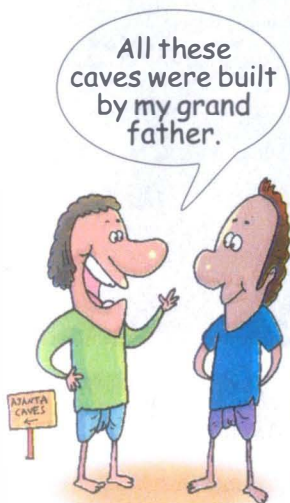
The magnificent Peacock Throne of Emperor Shah

Jahan had an enamelled canopy studded with gems. Its underside was inlaid with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and garnets. It was supported by 12 pillars covered with emerald facings, and got its name from the bejeweled peacocks that flanked it.

Ajanta Caves

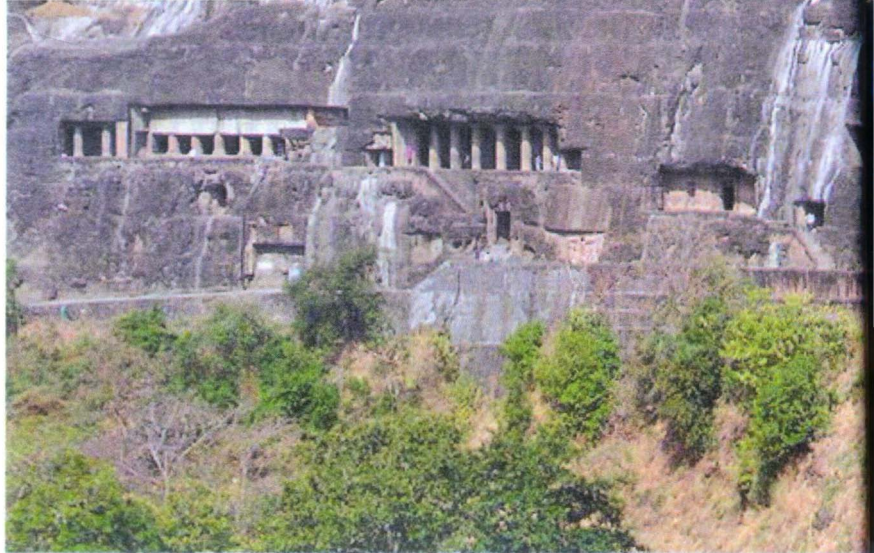
Why were the Ajanta Caves given this name?

The Ajanta Caves are situated north of Aurangabad in Maharashtra. They get their name from the village of Ajanta that is located nearby. The caves were discovered in 1819 by a British army officer. He stumbled on them by accident, during a hunting expedition. The caves are carved out of a horse shoe shaped rock surface that overlooks a stream, and this cliff is nearly 76 metres tall. There are 31 caves in all, and it is believed that they were carved in the 2nd century BC as a retreat for Buddhist monks during the rainy season. They were used as prayer halls for about nine centuries, and then abruptly abandoned. Today, the caves are an important tourist destination, and are famous for their magnificent murals.



Ajanta Caves



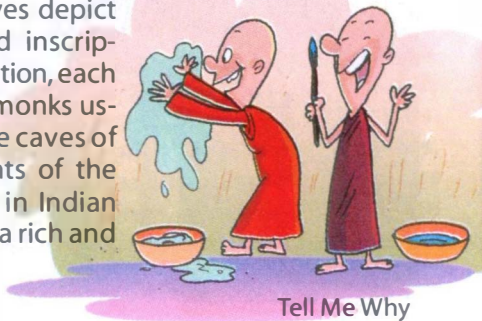


Why are the Ajanta Caves important?

The Ajanta Caves are important because they include paintings and sculptures considered to be masterpieces of Buddhist religious art. Some paintings reflect the Theravada tradition of depicting the Buddha only in symbolic form such as a throne or footprints. Others feature colourful murals and statues depicting the life of the Buddha and various Bodhisattvas. There are also frescos which are reminiscent of the paintings found in Sri Lanka, and some of the caves depict scenes from everyday life and inscriptions. Inspired by faith and devotion, each figure has been carved by the monks using just hammer and chisel. The caves of Ajanta reflect the achievements of the Gupta and post Gupta period in Indian history. They tell us the story of a rich and a glorious past.

Another View of the Ajanta Caves

Hurry up!
I am ready to
draw my master-
piece.





The Ajanta Caves

There are 30 caves, including some unfinished ones at Ajanta. Of them five are prayer halls - 'Chaityas' and rest are monasteries - 'Viharas'.

Why are the Ajanta paintings special?

The paintings in the Ajanta Caves depict different incidents in the life of Buddha, as well contemporary events and social life. A special technique was used to execute the paintings. The rock surface was first prepared with elaborate care, and scored with chisel marks and grooves to hold the next layers in place. A first layer of red earth mixed with rock-grit or sand, vegetable fibres, and grass was then applied on the rough surface of walls and ceilings. The surface was finally finished with a thin coat of lime wash. Outlines were drawn on the surface, and the spaces were filled with colours. The paintings of Ajanta are not frescoes in the accepted sense of the word. Frescoes are painted while the lime wash is still wet, so that it acts as a binding agent, but those of the Ajanta caves use glue as the binding agent.



A Painting from Cave 1

Ellora Caves

Why are the Ellora Caves considered a meeting place of three great religions?

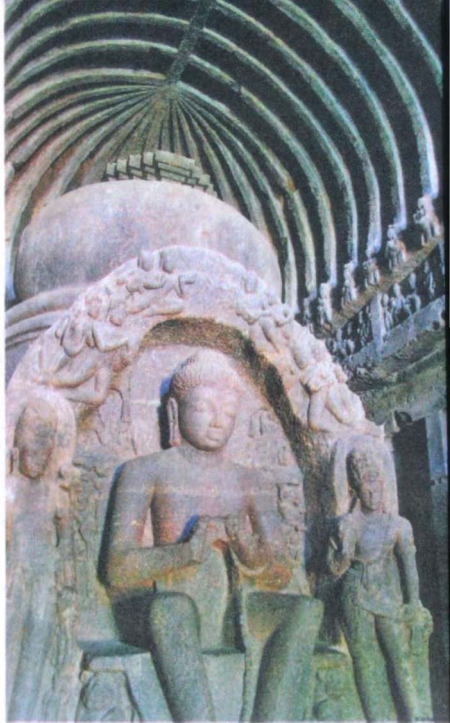
The Ellora Caves are a series of ancient temples and monasteries hewn into the side of the Charnadari Hill in the Deccan Plateau. India is the birthplace of three world religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Historically speaking, the emergence of Ellora coincided with the decline of Buddhism, and a Hindu renaissance in AD 7th and 9th centuries in India. The Ellora Caves fall into three distinct groups, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain. There are twelve Buddhist caves, and the first nine Buddhist caves are variations of viharas or monasteries, filled with figures of Lord Buddha, and scenes

*Kailasanatha Temple -
Cave 16*

Who built
this? I am
confused....



from Buddhist mythology. The Hindu Caves are seventeen in number, and represent the peak of Ellora's development. They contain impressive sculptures of deities from the Hindu pantheon. There are five Jain caves. They are simpler than the other caves, but are just as inspiring, with elephants and lions coming to life in their depths. There is no doubt that the Ellora Caves bear witness to the spirit of tolerance among faiths.



A View of Cave 10

Why are the Ellora Caves important?

The Ellora Caves are important because they follow the development of religious thought in India through the decline of Buddhism in the latter half of 8th century to the Hindu renaissance that followed the return of the Gupta dynasty, and then the Jain resurgence between the 9th and 11th centuries. The Buddhists caves are





*Relief of Nataraja at
Kailasanatha Temple,
Ellora*

A Stone Carved Pillar

monastery halls, which the monks used for study, solitary meditation, and communal worship, as well as for their daily activities like eating and sleeping.

The Hindu caves present another world. They are profusely sculptured with Shiva and Vishnu images. They begin with Shiva killing a demon, and moving in a clockwise direction, they end with Vishnu as the man-lion Narasimha. These caves lie in the centre of the group, and are the most numerous.

The Jain caves are the simplest, and radiate an aura of peace. The main idols in the Ellora Caves in all the three groups are larger than life-size. Ellora has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, and is preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India.

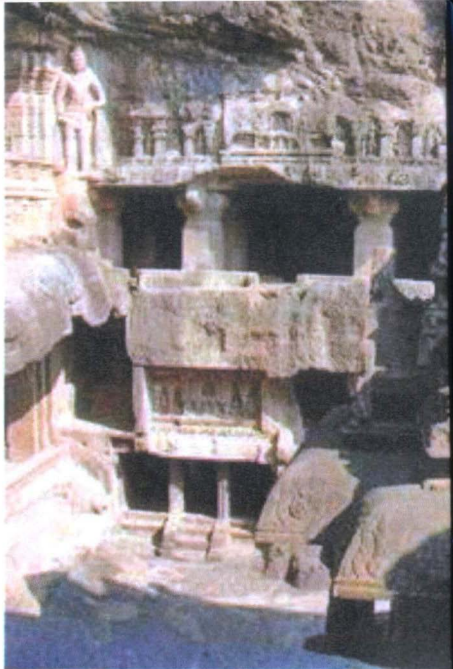




Indrasabha Temple

The two storied Indrasabha temple is a masterpiece located in the Jain caves. It is a huge structure that can be reached by a flight of steps, flanked by magnificent carvings. There is a courtyard with a small shrine, and the sides of the central quadrangle contain many more shrines to the Jain saints.

A Jain Cave in Ellora



Why is the Tin Tala cave in Ellora an architectural wonder?

The Tin Tala is the 12th Buddhist cave in Ellora. It is at first glance, rather plain, with unadorned pillars and sculpted panels only on the innerwalls. However, it is breathtaking in that this three storey structure was completely fashioned by human hands, without the aid of any machines. It is a monastery cum chapel that has been painstakingly carved to house forty monks. Its floors and ceilings are smooth and levelled, and it is without doubt, a tribute to the architectural skill of the Buddhist monks in the 8th century.

Painting in the Dark

It is truly amazing that such intricate paintings were done on the walls of dark caves, where there is very little natural light. So how did the monks manage to do these paintings? One theory is that they used mirrors to reflect and magnify whatever little natural light there was. Another theory is that the pools of water that gathered in the depressions in the rock floor acted like mirrors to enhance the available light.

Taj Mahal



Why is the Taj Mahal awe-inspiring?

The Taj Mahal is an inspiring monument built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan between 1631 and 1648, as a tribute to the memory of his favourite wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631. It is believed that thousands of workers from

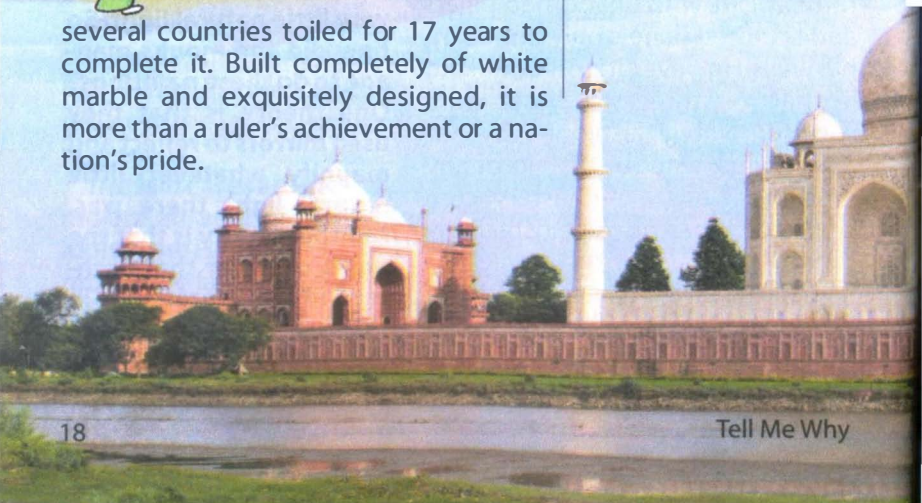
I got a job visa for India, to join the Taj Mahal construction team.



several countries toiled for 17 years to complete it. Built completely of white marble and exquisitely designed, it is more than a ruler's achievement or a nation's pride.

Designer of the Taj

It is still not clear who designed the Taj. Ustad Ahmed Lahouri is generally believed to be the chief architect, but some others think it was Ustad Isa from Turkey. France and Italy both claim that it was the brain child of their artists. However, we can safely say that the Taj is the sum total of the designs of two centuries of Mughal tombs.

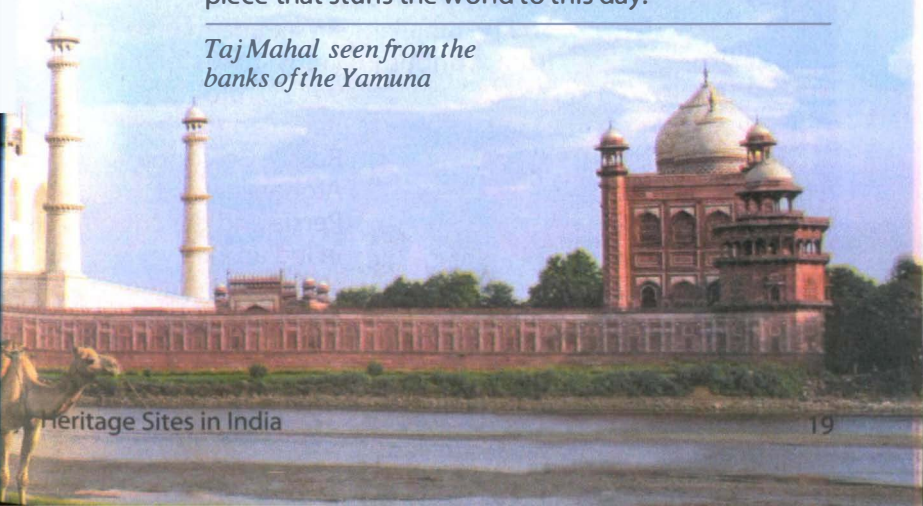


Why did Shah Jahan build the Taj Mahal?

Shah Jahan became the Emperor in 1628 after a bloody battle for the throne. He gave his favourite wife the title of Mumtaz Mahal, which means 'jewel of the palace'. In 1631, Shah Jahan went on an expedition to the South. Mumtaz Mahal always accompanied him, wherever he went, and this journey was no exception. Tragically, she died during childbirth at Burhanpur. She was the mother of 14 children, of whom only seven survived. She was just 39 at the time of her death, and Shah Jahan was heartbroken. He went into mourning for two years, during which there was no music or any kind of celebration in the court.

The emperor, a passionate builder, then decided to give his beloved a memorial that would express his love for her. So, the Taj Mahal took shape, beside the Yamuna River, set amidst splendid gardens. The site was chosen because Shah Jahan could gaze at it from the Agra Fort, his palace. Skilled architects, more than 20,000 workers, inlay craftsmen, calligraphers, stone carvers, and masons from lands as distant as Persia and Turkey toiled to create a masterpiece that stuns the world to this day.

*Taj Mahal seen from the
banks of the Yamuna*

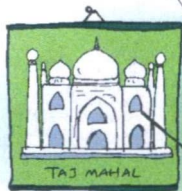


*The tombs of
Shah Jahan and
Mumtaz Mahal
in the Taj Mahal*



*Great Gate of the
Taj Mahal*

This stone
is from Baghdad,
and this one from
Egypt, and this
one.....



Why is the Taj Mahal one of the wonders of the world?

The Taj Mahal is one of the most flawless architectural creations of all time. For the past five centuries, travellers from all over the world have gazed in awe at its incomparable beauty. Situated on the right bank of the Yamuna River, the Taj Mahal gleams like a jewel in the perfect setting of its vast gardens. The purity of the white marble, and the intricacy of the floral arabesques, as well as the decorative bands, all highlight to perfection the exquisite calligraphy. The materials for its construction came from all over India and Central Asia. The pristine white Makrana marble came from Jodhpur. Precious stones for the inlay

were brought from Baghdad, Punjab, Egypt, Russia, Golconda, China, Afghanistan, Ceylon, Persia and the countries in Indian Ocean. The Taj Mahal, without doubt, is considered to be the finest example of Mughal architecture.



Mood Change

Did you know that the Taj Mahal seems to change moods according to the time of the day? The Taj Mahal shimmers with a cool, ethereal beauty in the moonlight, glows a blushing pink at dawn, and blazes a fiery red when the white marble catches the rays of the setting sun.

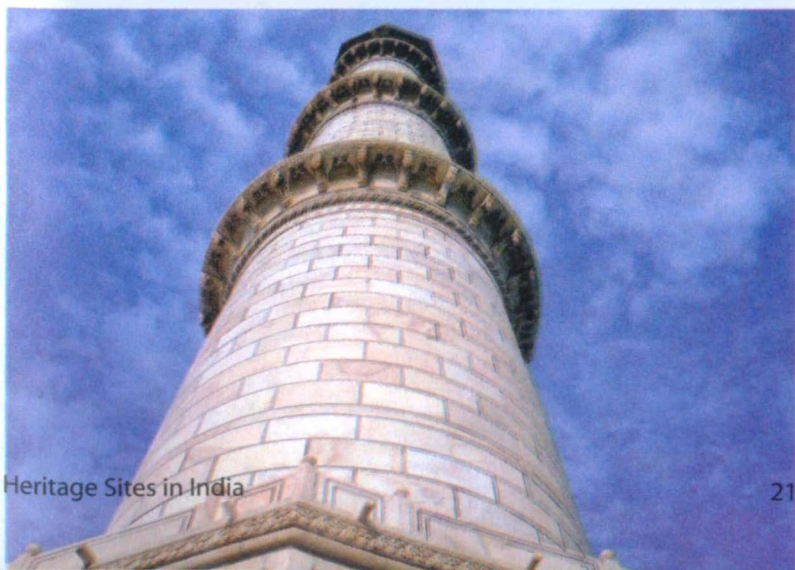
*Minaret of the
Taj Mahal*

Why is the Taj Mahal called an architectural masterpiece?

The Taj Mahal represents the finest and most sophisticated example of Mughal architecture. It incorporates and expands on many design traditions, particularly Persian and earlier Mughal architecture. Known for its symmetry, the Taj Mahal sits on a raised platform surrounded by four minarets

The massive red sandstone Taj gateway was completed in the year 1648, and stands 30 metres high. The gateway is topped by small cupolas or chhatris. Symbolic of the divide between the material and the spiritual, the gateway is decorated in calligraphy with verses from the holy Koran.

The tomb stands on its own marble plinth, which rests on a red sandstone

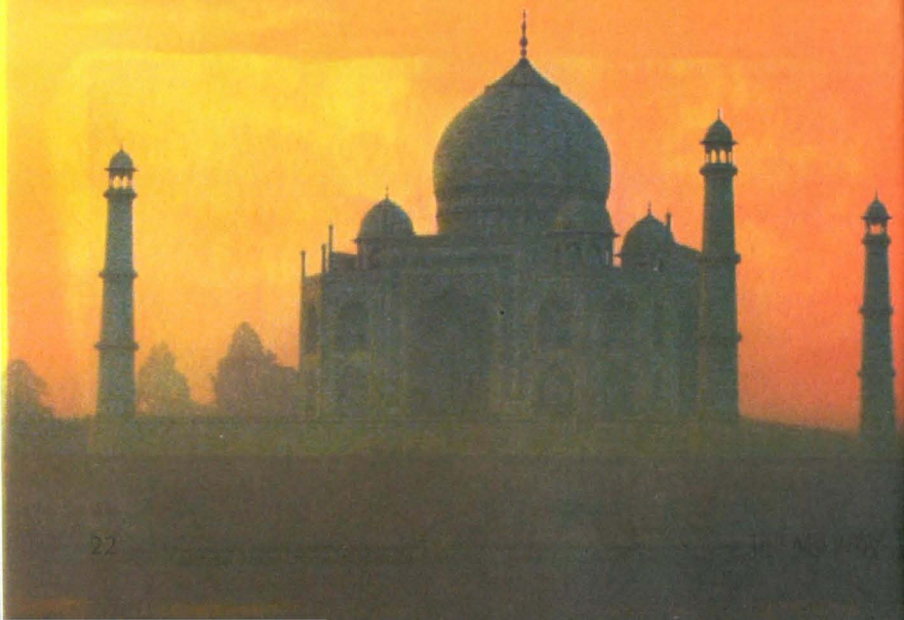


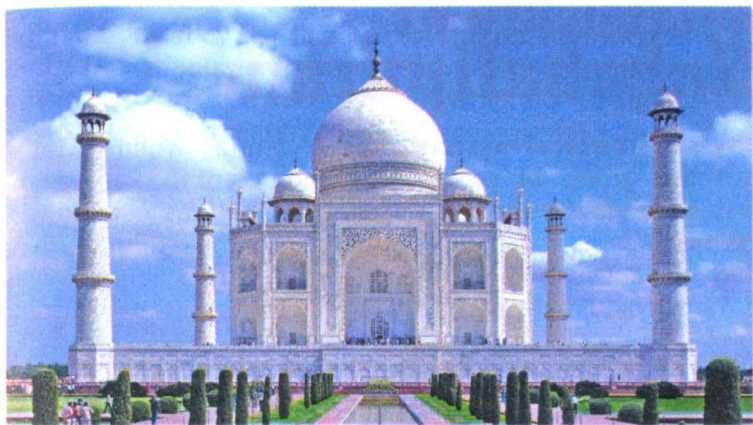
platform. Four tall pillars rise up from the corners of the white marble plinth. They are topped with eight windowed cupolas. Immediately below the dome, is the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal, which is centrally lined with the main entrance. Besides Mumtaz Mahal's tomb, is the tomb of Shah Jahan.

The crypt and the cenotaphs at the Taj carry decorations of fabulous elegance. As many as 35 different types of precious stones have been used on a single bloom-turquoise, jade, agate, coral, lapis lazuli, onyx, bloodstone, cornelian, jasper, garnet and malachite have been used to fashion blooms of fuchsias, lily, honeysuckle and more.

The beauty of the Taj Mahal is enhanced by the garden laid out in the Persian Charbagh or four garden plan style.

The Taj Mahal at Sunset





*The Taj Mahal-
View from the South*



Amazing Detailing

The fine detailing leaves the visitor to the Taj Mahal wonderstruck. Flowers are the main decorative elements as the tomb represents a palace garden. The inlay work is done with such skill that it is impossible to discern any joints, even when as many as 40 tiny pieces of semi precious stones have been used in the petals of a single flower.

Heritage Sites in India

How are the tombs arranged in the Taj Mahal?

The Taj Mahal houses the tombs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan himself. The actual tombs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jehan are in the basement, while in the main chamber, there are false tombs surrounded by lace-like marble screens. These screens transmit light into the actual burial chamber. Both tombs are exquisitely inlaid with semi precious stones. Calligraphic inscriptions of the ninety nine names of Allah can also be seen on the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal. Shah Jahan's tomb lies next to Mumtaz Mahal's, but was not a part of the original plan.

Monuments of Mahabalipuram

Why is there a bit of mystery about the group of monuments in Mahabalipuram?

The monuments at Mahabalipuram in Kancheepuram district, Tamil Nadu, date back to

the 7th century when it was a thriving port of the Pallava Empire. The Pallavas were powerful rulers of the region south of Madras. Mahabalipuram was famous for its trade with distant



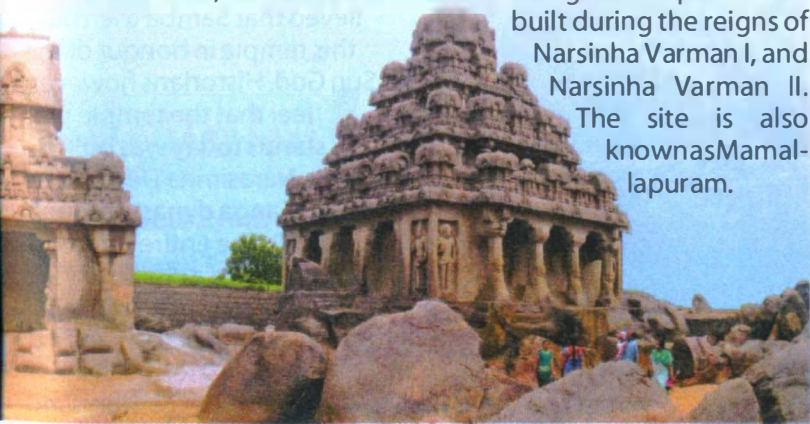
*A Panoramic
View of
Monuments of
Mahabalipuram*

Why are the monuments at Mahabalipuram one of the world's treasures?

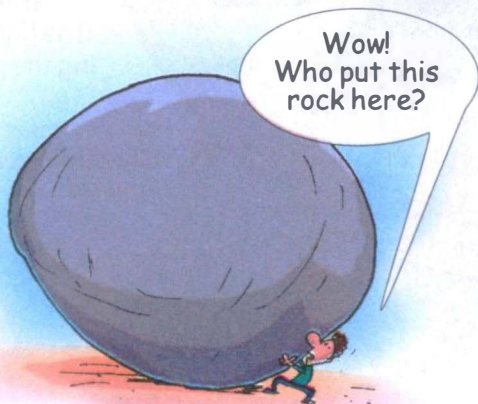
Mahabalipuram means the City of Bali. It is also known as Mamallapuram after Mamalla, who was responsible of creating the earliest monument under the reign of the Pallava king Narasimha Varman I. This temple town is said to be at least 2000 years old. It includes eleven excavated temples or 'mandapas', two open-air bas-reliefs including Arjuna's Penance', and one enclosed bas-relief shrine. Beside these, there is a unique stone chariot called 'ratha' cut out of a

kingdoms, both by sea, and by land. The monuments were carved out of rock on the Coromandel Coast, sometime between the 7th and 8th centuries. They are renowned for their temples, caves, sanctuaries, stone chariots and giant open air reliefs, depicting the glory of Lord Shiva. However, these monu-

ments remain a bit of a mystery, as no one knows their purpose, or why royal patronage to the place was abruptly withdrawn. Experts say that there were seven pagodas or temples on the shores of Mahabalipuram. All but one were destroyed by the sea. Most of the temples and rock carvings of this place were built during the reigns of Narsinha Varman I, and Narsinha Varman II. The site is also known as Mamallapuram.



rock. There are five more 'rathas' along with three big sculptures of a Nandi, a lion, and an elephant. A palace in ruins can also be seen nearby along with a temple. The Temple of Sthalasayana Perumal and the Shore Temple are perhaps the best known of all the temples.



Konarak Sun Temple

Who built the Konarak Sun Temple?

According to legend, the Konarak Sun Temple was built by Samba, son of Lord Krishna. He was afflicted with leprosy, and after twelve years of severe penance, he was cured by the Sun God, Surya. It is believed that Samba then built this temple in honour of the Sun God. Historians however, feel that the temple that stands today was built by Narasimha Deva of the Ganga dynasty around 1250. The entire temple is in the form of a chariot to the Sun God, pulled by seven horses. The cult of the Sun God had originated in Kashmir around the 8th century, and spread to eastern India as well. The Konarak temple was built during the period when the cult was at its peak.

*Chariot Wheel of the Sun Temple,
Konarak*



Look!
How is my painting
Kona-Arka?



Sun Temple Symbols

The Konarak Temple is built to represent the chariot of the Sun God. There are seven stone horses that represent the seven days of the week. The twelve pairs of wheels stand for the twelve months of the year.

*A Panoramic View of
Konarak Sun Temple*

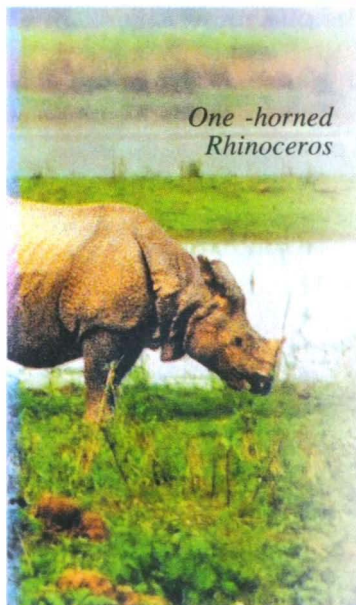
Why is the Konarak Temple considered to be a shining example of temple architecture?

On the shores of the Bay of Bengal, stands a magnificent stone temple built with such precision and skill that the rays of the rising sun strike its main entry at dawn. This is the Konarak Sun Temple. The temple is built to resemble the Sun God's chariot. It has 24 wheels with spokes sculpted with symbols that represent the cycle of the seasons, and the months. There are seven stone horses that appear to be pulling the chariot. However, the rest of the temple follows the plan of traditional Orissa temples. The exquisite carvings on the outer walls, and the free standing sculptures make this temple truly a tribute to the artisans of Orissa.

The word
'konarak' is a
combination of
two words,
'kona' meaning
corner, and
'arka'
meaning sun.



Kaziranga National Park



*One -horned
Rhinoceros*

Where is the Kaziranga National Park?

The Kaziranga National Park is in Assam, on the banks of the majestic Brahmaputra River. It is the oldest park in Assam. The park is made up of swamps, and tall thickets of elephant grass. The grasslands are interspersed with open forest, and interconnecting streams and lakes, making it the ideal habitat for the one horned Indian rhino. In fact, it has the world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceroses, as well as many other mammals, including tigers, elephants, panthers and bears, and thousands of birds too. In 1940, the park was declared a wild life sanctuary. Today, the Kaziranga National Park is one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites in India.

Why is the Kaziranga National Park associated with the one horned rhinoceros?

The one-horned rhinoceros is a huge beast, next in size to an elephant. One-horned rhinos are herbivorous animals, and they are found in tall grasslands and riverine forests. The Kaziranga National Park is the only national park in India where they can be seen in their natural habitat. The largest of the three Asian rhinos, the one-horned rhino has a single distinctive tusk, as its name suggests. Its skin is grey brown, and it has folds which make it look as

though the animal has armour plating. One-horned rhinos are called landscape architects because they take up to three days to digest a meal of grasses, leaves, aquatic plants, and fruits. During this time, they move around quite a bit, and so, the seeds of whatever they have eaten are transported to different places before being deposited as droppings.

The one-horned rhino was hunted relentlessly for its horn which is in great demand for traditional medicines, and it has been placed on the endangered list of animals. Kaziranga National Park has more than 75% of the entire global population of one-horned rhinos.

*Indian Roller
coaster at
Kaziranga
National Park*





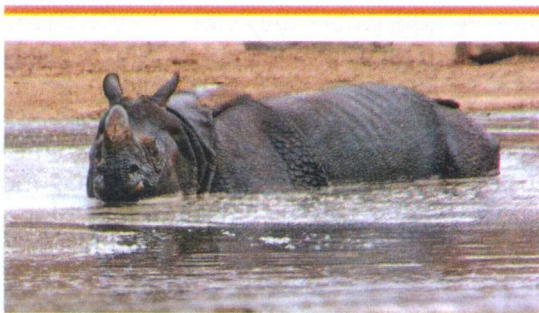
The Legend of Kaziranga

According to legend, a girl named Ranga and a youth called Kazi fell in love. They lived in nearby villages, but since they were not allowed to marry, they ran away together, and were never seen again. The forest into which they disappeared came to be called Kaziranga.

Why is the Kaziranga National Park a haven for wildlife?

More than 15 species of India's threatened mammals can be found here. It also boasts of the world's largest population of Indian rhinoceros and Indian elephants. When the park gets flooded during the monsoons, these animals migrate to the nearby Mikir Hills.

Kaziranga's lakes and streams are rich in many forms of marine life,



One - horned Rhinoceros at Kaziranga National Park

which provide abundant food for the wild animals and birds that are found here. Thousands of migratory birds- over a hundred species of them- flock to the park seasonally. Some of them come from as far away as Siberia! In all, over 300 species of birds can be seen here, while reptiles like the Indian python, water monitor, common cobra, and king cobra abound. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Kaziranga National Park has been designated as a World Heritage site.

Keoladeo National Park



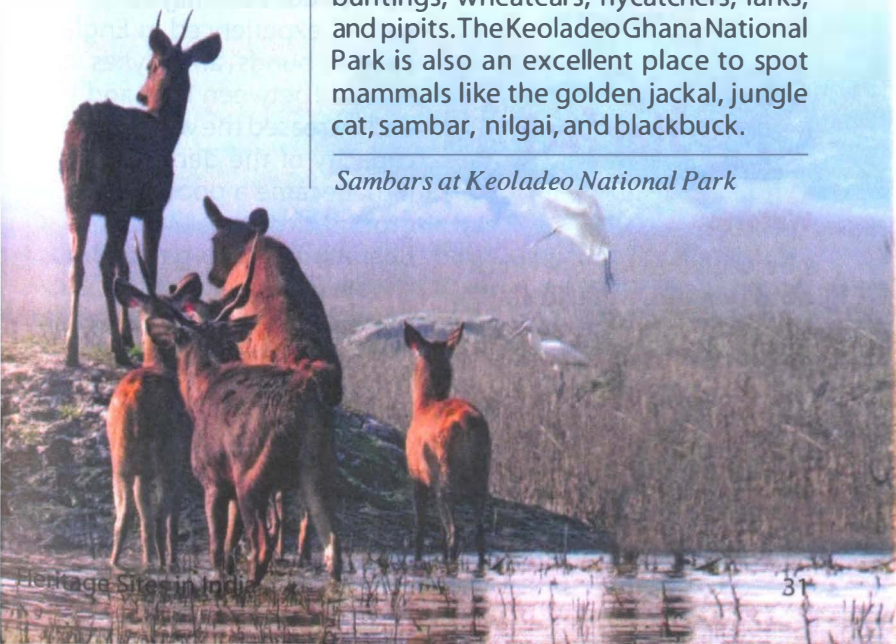
World Heritage Site

The park was first established as a reserve forest in 1908. In 1916, it was declared a game sanctuary. The park became a wild life sanctuary in 1950, and a World Heritage site in 1985.

Why is the Keoladeo Ghana National Park ideal for bird watching?

The Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur was earlier known as the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary. Bharatpur is in Rajasthan, and every year it plays host to thousands of migratory birds during the winter season. Keoladeo Ghana National Park is truly a paradise for birds, with over 380 resident and migrant species, including the Common Demoiselle and the rare Siberian cranes. The migratory birds include several species of cranes, hawks, pelicans, geese, shanks, ducks, eagles, warblers, stints, wagtails, buntings, wheatears, flycatchers, larks, and pipits. The Keoladeo Ghana National Park is also an excellent place to spot mammals like the golden jackal, jungle cat, sambar, nilgai, and blackbuck.

Sambars at Keoladeo National Park





Great Egret



Waterfowls

The Keoladeo National Park abounds with waterfowls like the gadwall, shoveler, common teal, tufted duck, little cormorant, and great cormorant.

The Saras Crane with its spectacular courtship dance is one of the main attractions of the park.

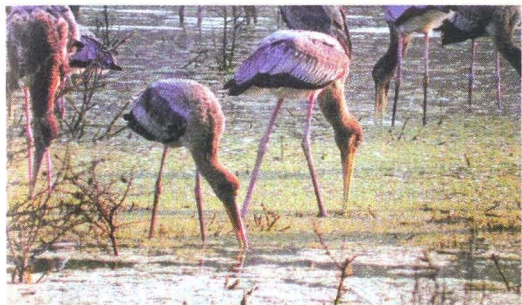
Why is the history of Keoladeo National Park an interesting one?

The Keoladeo Ghana National Park is also known simply as the Keoladeo National Park. It is named after the Keoladeo or Shiva temple that is inside the park. In the past, the area encompassed by the park had a natural depression, surrounded by a forest or "ghana". This depression was subjected to seasonal flooding by the waters of the river Banganga.

The area was developed into a duck shooting reserve in 1899 by the ruler of Bharatpur. Inspired by the duck shooting events that he had experienced in England, he got bunds and dykes constructed between 1850 and 1899 and increased the water-holding capacity of the depression. The park became a popular hunting ground for the Maharajas of Bharatpur who organized duck shoots for visiting royalty. Later, the Government of Rajasthan took over the park, and made it a bird sanctuary in 1956. In the year 1967, the area of Keoladeo Ghana was finally declared as a protected forest. In 1981, Keoladeo was declared as a National Park.

Timeline

The Keoladeo National Park was previously the private shooting preserve of the Maharajah of Bharatpur. It was established as a game sanctuary in 1956, a national park in 1982, and a Ramsar site in 1981. It made the World Heritage site list in 1985.



Group of Painted Storks



Common Parakeet



Curious Fact

A Rich Park

The Keoladeo National Park has more than 350 species of birds which include 42 species of raptors, and 9 species of owls. There are 34 species of mammals, 22 species of reptiles, 8 species of amphibians, 57 species of fish, and 71 species of butterflies. There are also more than 30 species of dragonflies, and another 30 species of spiders in the park.





Manas Wildlife Sanctuary

Why was the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary selected as a World Heritage site?

The Manas Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam is located on a gentle slope at the foothills of the Himalayas, where wooded hills give way to alluvial grasslands and tropical forests. Covering an area of 39,100 hectares, it spans the Manas River, and is bounded to the north by the forests of Bhutan. The sanctuary provides critical and viable habitats for rare and endangered species, including the tiger, greater one-horned rhino, swamp deer, pygmy hog, and Bengal florican.

The Manas Wildlife Sanctuary provides habitat for 22 of India's most threatened species of mammals. In total, there are nearly 60 mammal species, 42 reptile species, 7 amphibians, and 500 species of birds, of which 26 are globally threatened. The park gets its name from the Manas River which is named after the serpent Goddess, Manasa. The river flows through the park, which is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage site because of its rich biodiversity.

Friends,
you are Welcome!



MANAS
WILD LIFE
SANCTUARY



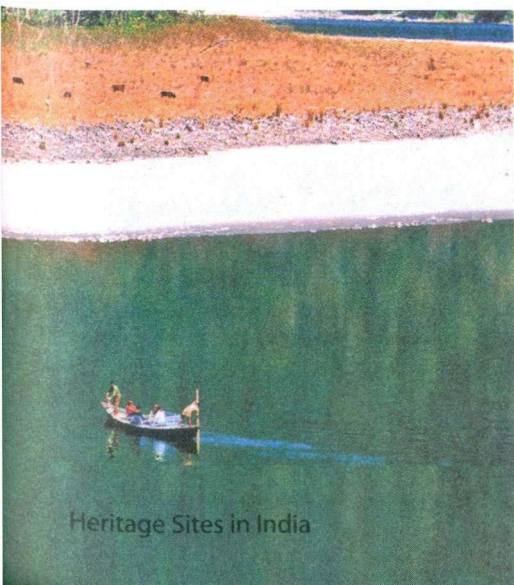
Highly Endangered

The most endangered animals in the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary are the golden langur, pygmy hog and hispid hare. The pygmy hog is the smallest member of the pig family, and according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is one of the 12 most endangered animals in the world. It was rediscovered in the Manas Forest in 1971.

Why is the geography of the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary interesting?

The Manas Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the foothills of the Outer Himalayas. The Manas River flows through the western portion of the park, where it splits into three separate rivers, and joins the Brahmaputra some 64 kilometres further south. These rivers carry an enormous amount of silt, and rock debris from the foothills, which leads to the formation of alluvial

*Manas
River*



terraces. The area of the Boki basin, in the west of the park, is sometimes flooded during the monsoon. The park consists of tropical semi-evergreen forests in the north, tropical moist, and dry deciduous forests over most of its area, and extensive alluvial grasslands in the west. There is also a considerable variety of aquatic flora along river banks, and in the numerous pools.

Why is Manas an important wildlife destination?

Manas is noted for its spectacular scenery, with a variety of habitat types that support a diverse fauna, making it the richest of all Indian wildlife areas. It is famous for its Tiger Reserve, which also provides protection for migratory wildlife. In fact, Manas harbours the greatest number of India's Schedule I mammals of any protected area in the country. These include the golden langur, capped langur, hoolock gibbon, clouded leopard, tiger, leopard cat, and golden cat.

Fifty-five species of mammals, thirty-six species of reptiles, and three species of amphibians have been sighted at Manas. Over 450 species of birds have been recorded, including the threatened Bengal florican, great pied hornbill, wreathed hornbill, and other hornbills. Manas also has a variety of reptiles including different species of snakes, gharials and monitor lizards. The richness and diversity of its fauna and flora have made Manas one of the most popular wild life destinations in India today.

*A View of
the Manas
Wildlife
Sanctuary*



Tell Me Why

Churches and Convents of Goa

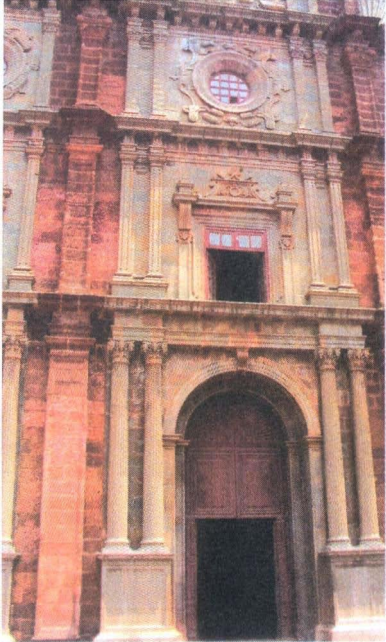
Why is Goa's culture unique?

The cultural heritage of Goa is very different from that of the rest of India. The Portuguese ruled here for many years, and their influence can be seen everywhere. At the same time, the people have not forgotten their Indian roots. Goa is a place where the people respect ancient traditions, yet are very modern in their outlook. It is also a place where you will find all religions existing together in perfect harmony. Easter and Diwali, Christmas and Shivarathri are all celebrated with equal passion.

Magnificent churches, and ancient temples dot the breathtaking landscape in profusion. The Goans have music in their blood, and both Indian and Western music are appreciated and performed with equal pleasure. Yes, Goa is truly a place where East meets West, and it is this amazing blend of the Indian and the Portuguese that makes Goan culture unique.

Goan coastline





Basilica of Bom Jesus



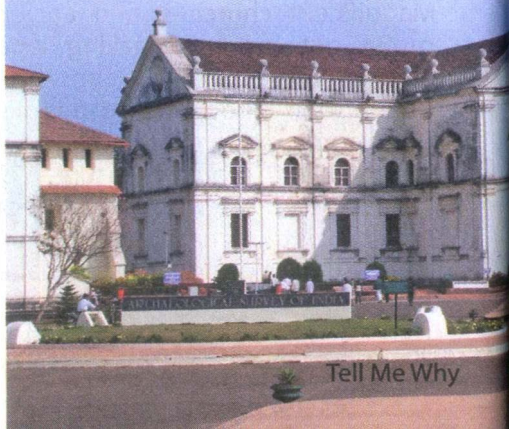
The Se Cathedral

The Se Cathedral is one of the largest churches in Asia. The west facing cathedral has a Tuscan exterior with square towers flanking the 30.3 metre high facade. The interior has huge pillars dividing the 76.2 metre long central space from the side aisles. The cathedral has 15 altars.

Why are the churches of Goa historically important?

In 1542, the Jesuits arrived in Goa. They built tall and imposing churches with magnificent interiors. Their awe inspiring appearance and interiors lavishly adorned with twisted columns, decorated pediments, profusely carved and gilded altars, and colourful wall paintings impressed the local population, and played an important role in converting them to Christianity.

Of the 60 churches that were surviving in the 18th century, sadly, only seven major churches remain today. However, even those that are in ruins are archaeological treasures of historical importance. This is because, these churches exerted great influence in the 16th-18th centuries, on the development of architecture, sculpture, and painting. The churches helped to spread different forms of art throughout the countries of Asia.





Church Bells of Goa

The Church of Mary Immaculate Conception is one of the most famous landmarks of Goa. It is famous for the largest bell in India, which is also the second largest in the world.

The Se Cathedral, dedicated to St. Catherine, has five bells which include the famous Golden Bell, which is among the world's largest, too.



Bell of the Church of Mary Immaculate Conception

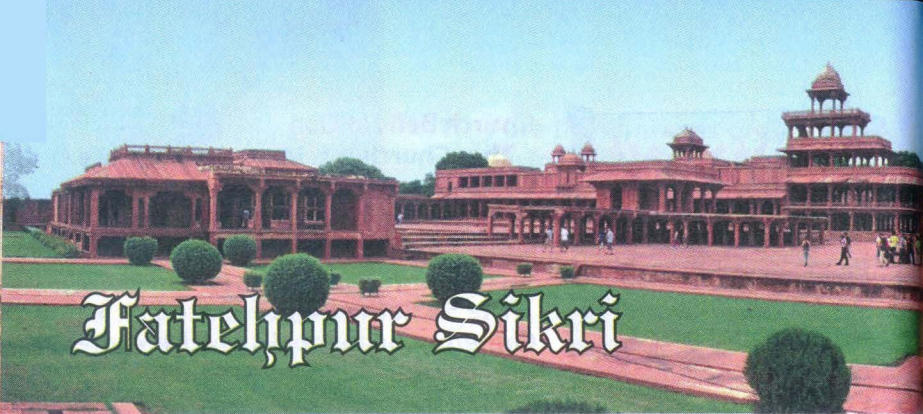
Se Cathedral



Why is St. Francis Xavier called The Lord of Goa?

St. Francis Xavier was a Jesuit missionary from Spain. He came to Goa as a missionary in 1542. He cared for the ill in the Royal Hospital, and preached in the streets for the conversion and salvation of souls. He performed miracles during these journeys, and it is believed that he turned casks of sea water into fresh water for sailors, and brought a boy back to life after he had fallen overboard.

This noble priest fell ill, and died in 1552, on the island of Sancian. His body was brought back to Goa in a miraculously well preserved condition. It remains there to this day, in the Bom Jesus Church. St. Francis Xavier is the patron saint of Goa, and his feast is celebrated every year with religious fervour and passion. He is cherished in the hearts of the people, who call him 'Lord of Goa' with awe and reverence.



Fatehpur Sikri

*A Panoramic View of
Fatehpur Sikri*

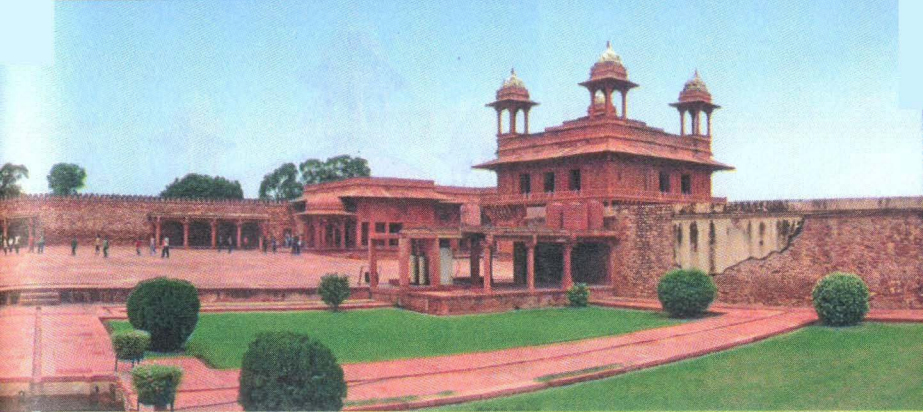
Why is Fatehpur Sikri so named?

Fatehpur Sikri was built by the Emperor Akbar in 1571. The work, supervised by Akbar himself, was completed in 1573. Fatehpur Sikri derives its name from the village of Sikri, which occupied the spot earlier. The prefix Fatehpur, or 'city of victory', was added in 1573 after Akbar's conquest of Gujarat.

The city comprised of a series of palaces, public buildings and mosques, as well as living areas for the court, the army, servants of the king, and for his people. It was built on a rocky plateau, near an artificial lake, and the monuments were constructed of red sandstone, in a blend of Hindu, Persian, and Indo-Muslim traditions. In 1585, however, Akbar abandoned Fatehpur Sikri to fight against the Afghan tribes, and chose a new capital. Though it had a short life of splendour, Fatehpur Sikri has remained till date as one of the most magnificent and well-preserved heritage sites in India.

Birbal, we will
make this 'Sikri' a
'Fatehpur Sikri...'





Panch Mahal

The Panch Mahal is a five-floored pillared pavilion in Fatehpur Sikri. This extraordinary building was called badgir or wind tower, because its innumerable pillars on all the floors allowed the breeze to flow through it, so that it was always cool, even in summer. Built on the pattern of a Buddhist temple, Panch Mahal was basically a pleasure palace of Emperor Akbar.

Why is Fatehpur Sikri the city that an emperor forgot?

Akbar chose to build his city in the village of Sikri out of reverence for Sheikh Salim, a religious mystic of the Chisti order, who prophesied that he would have three sons at that site. Akbar moved his pregnant wife to Sikri where she had two sons. In thanksgiving, Akbar decided to build an imperial mosque and palace at the village of Sikri.

After 1573, it was regarded as the capital of the Mughal Empire. However, after the city was abandoned by Akbar in 1585 to fight a campaign in the Punjab, it seems to have declined just as rapidly. By 1610, it was completely abandoned. The reason for the sudden decline of the city is usually given as the failure of the water supply system. However, the real reason may have been the emperor's loss of interest, since he had built it on a whim in the first place.

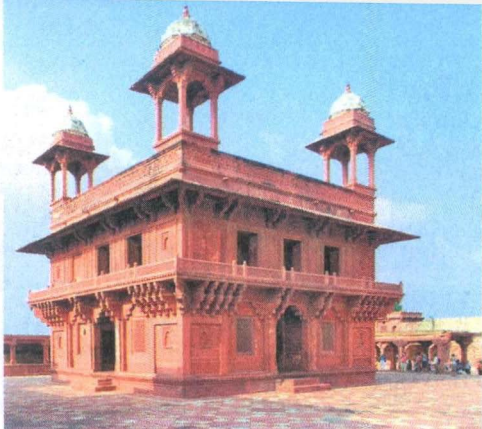


Diwan-i-Khas



Jodha Bai's Palace

The palace of Jodha Bai, the Rajput queen of the emperor is the largest and most important part of Akbar's imperial harem at Fatehpur Sikri. The palace consists of a rectangular block, with a single magnificent gateway on the eastern side, which was protected by guard rooms. Hindu motifs like swans, parrots, elephants and lotuses adorn the interior.



Why are the Diwan-i- Aam and Diwan-i-Khas important buildings in Fatehpur Sikri?

Fatehpur Sikri is regarded as Emperor Akbar's crowning architectural legacy. His creative and aesthetic impulses have found exquisite expression in its numerous palaces, halls, and masjids. The Diwan-i-Aam is the first enclosure of the palace as one enters. It is a vast courtyard that was used by Emperor Akbar for the daily public audience called 'Jharokha'. It was also used to dispense justice.

The Diwan-i-Aam gave access to a second magnificent enclosure that is called Diwan-i-Khas. This is undoubtedly the finest building in Fatehpur Sikri, and was used for the private audiences and other court activities. This inspiring chamber is dominated by a massive carved pillar that has thirty six brackets supporting a balcony for Akbar. If you ever get a chance to visit Fatehpur Sikri, let your imagination soar, and in your mind's eye you will see Akbar granting audience to his subjects, and dispensing justice.

Tell Me Why





Group of Monuments at Hampi

Why is the story of Hampi an amazing one?

The story of Hampi is the amazing saga of how a tiny hamlet grew into the sprawling medieval metropolis, that was the capital of the grand Vijayanagar Empire. The history of Vijayanagar is one of resistance against the northern sultanates as well as building of its spectacular capital in Hampi. The city grew to be one of the major trading centres of the medieval world. Everything from horses to gems was traded here. Art and architecture found a special place in Hampi, as its rulers were great patrons of art and religion.

In course of time, the Vijayanagar army suffered heavy losses, and its capital city was plundered. Its population was massacred, and treasure hunters ransacked its palaces and temples for months. The once glorious capital turned into an abandoned ghost city. Currently Hampi's monuments – hundreds of them – are popular among tourists and pilgrims. Hampi was declared a World Heritage site in 1986.

Virupaksha Temple



Krishnadevaraya

Krishnadevaraya, who ruled the kingdom of Vijayanagara between 1509-1529, was one of the greatest statesmen in medieval South India. His rule was marked by all round prosperity, culturally, and materialistically. He was a great warrior and a poet. Krishnadevaraya encouraged learning, art, and architecture. When he died, the glory of the Vijayanagar Empire died with him.

Which are the main monuments of Hampi?

The 14th century ruins of Hampi lie scattered amidst giant boulders and vegetation, with the River Tungabhadra rushing in the north, and rocky granite ridges on the other three sides. Most of the monuments were built in honour of the sage Vidyardhaya, between 1336-1570 AD. A large number of royal buildings were raised by Krishnadevaraya, the greatest ruler of the dynasty.

One of the most spectacular structures is the zenana enclosure. Today, a massive stone basement in the queen's palace and the ornate pavilion called 'lotus-mahal' are the only remnants of a luxurious lifestyle. Other architectural masterpieces include the corner towers of arresting elevation, the treasury, the Mahanavami Dibba carrying beautifully sculptured panels, a variety of ponds, and tanks, mandapas, and the elephant's stables. Recent excavations at Hampi have brought to light a large number of palatial complexes and basements of several platforms too.



Tell Me Why



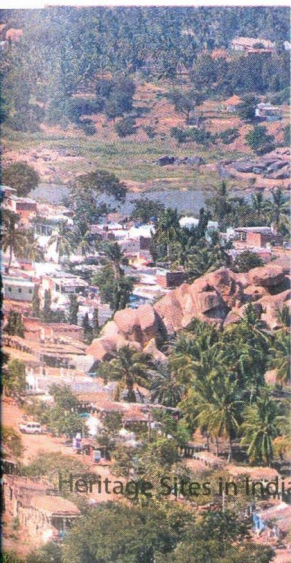
Hampi Temples

Which are the famous temples of Hampi?

Hampi is an ancient site that once used to be the royal capital and the religious centre of the Vijayanagar Empire. Its temples are so fabulous that Hampi can be called an open-air museum of temples. The Virupaksha temple is the most renowned shrine at Hampi. It has three towers, and the eastern tower rises to 49 metres, and has nine tiers. The temple traces its origin to the first half of the 15th century, and is dedicated to Virupaksheshwara or Pampapathi - a form of Lord Shiva. There is also a shrine to Vidyaranya, the spiritual founder of Vijayanagar. Other famous temples are the temples of Ramachandra and Hazara Rama.

The Vitthala temple is considered as the most impressive and most ornate of all the temples at Hampi. The presiding deity of the temple is Lord Vitthala, who is a form of

Ariel View of Hampi



amazing

King's Balance

Hampi is famous for a 5 metre or so tall 'balance' located near the Vitthala temple. On special occasions like the solar or lunar eclipse, kings were weighed against grain, gold or money, which was then distributed to the poor.



Robert Sewell

Robert Sewell was the collector and magistrate in Madras Presidency in colonial India. He was a scholar in history, and was in charge of the archaeology department too. His book on the Vijayanagar Empire was published in 1900, and offers us fascinating insights into this vanished civilization.



Bukka's Aqueeduct, Hampi



Travellers Notes

Domingo Paes and **Fernao Nuniz** were two Portuguese chroniclers who visited Vijayanagar and wrote down accounts of what they saw. **Abdur Razzaq** was a Persian, who was sent by Persian ruler **Shah Rukh** as ambassador to the **Zamorin of Calicut**. **Abdur Razzaq** also visited Vijayanagar during the reign of **Devaraya II**, and was overawed by its size and grandeur. His narrative provides valuable information on the topography, administration, and social life of Vijayanagar at that time.

Lord Vishnu. The foreground of the sanctum has a pillared hall which is beautifully decorated. The **Vitthala temple** is famed for its stone chariot. The stone wheels of this chariot are twisted in the form of a lotus, and can even revolve! Isn't that amazing?

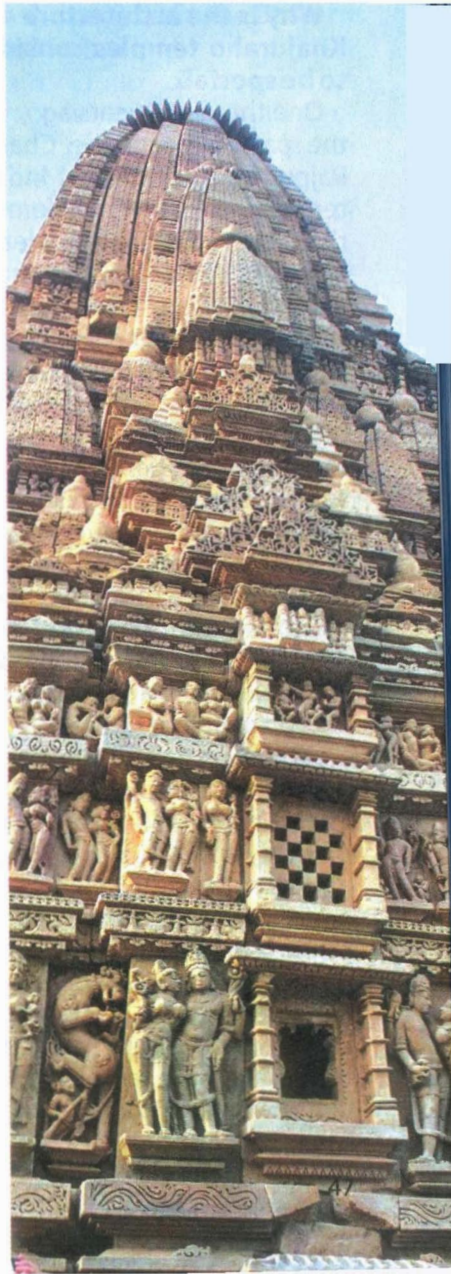
Khajuraho

Why is the history of Khajuraho fascinating?

Khajuraho was the first capital of the Chandelas, who ruled Bundelkhand from the 10th to the 14th centuries. The town got its name from the Khajur or the date palm tree, which abounds in this region. The Khajuraho temples are very different from the normal temples in India, because, the emphasis is on the stunning architecture, sculpture, and art of the period more than on religion, deities, and worship.

It took them more than 200 years to build these monuments. It is presumed that every Chandel ruler has built at least one temple in his lifetime. So, the Khajuraho temples were not constructed by any single king, but represent a tradition carried forward by successive rulers. After the fall of the Chandela dynasty, the wonderful Khajuraho temples suffered destruction and disfigurement by invaders. They lay abandoned, and were at the mercy of Nature till they were restored and revived in 19th century.

Heritage Sites in India



Why is the architecture of the Khajuraho temples considered to be special?

One thousand years ago, under the patronage of the Chandela Rajput kings of Central India, 85 temples, magnificent in form, and richly carved, were built near the village of Khajuraho. The Khajuraho temples are a tribute to the North Indian Nagara architectural style. The primary feature of this style is a central tower, whose highest point is directly over the temple's main deity. This is often surrounded by smaller, subsidiary and intermediate towers that naturally draw the eye up to the highest point, like a series of hills leading to a distant peak. Setting the temple on a raised base also shifts the eye upward, and enhances the illusion of height.

These extraordinary temples rise, spire upon spire, like a mirage. The spires have horizontal bands of richly carved figures of male and female forms, animals, trees and chariots, all sculpted with unerring perfection. The Jain temples nearby also have exquisite carvings. In fact, Khajuraho has the largest group of medieval Hindu and Jain temples that are famous for their sculpture, as well as their architecture.

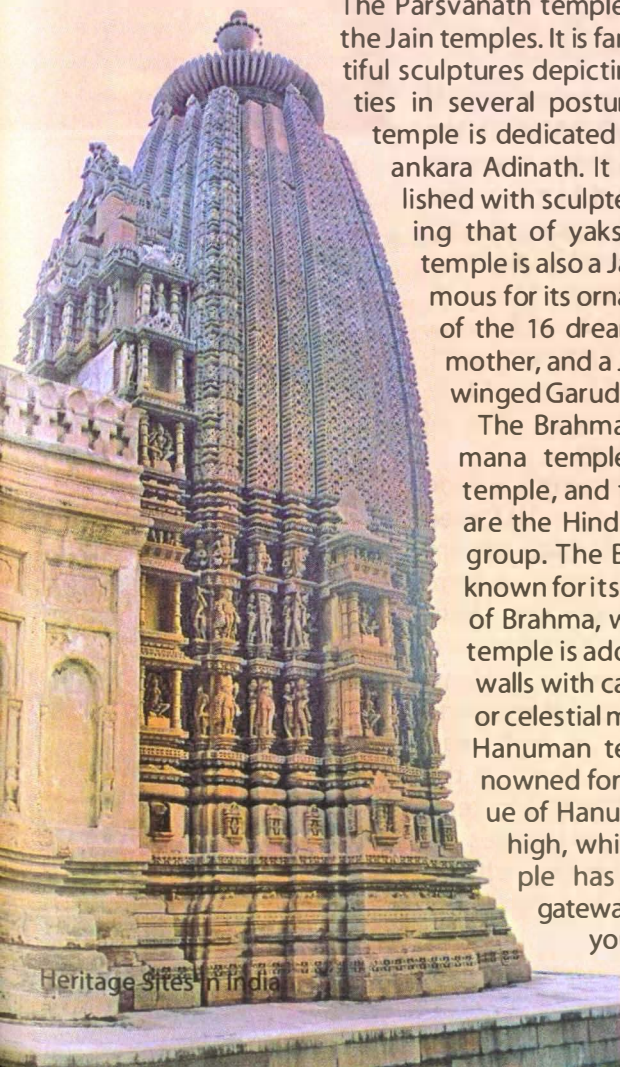


Which are the temples in the Eastern group at Khajuraho?

The Eastern Group of temples at Khajuraho includes the Parsvanath temple, Adinath temple, Ghantai temple, Hanuman temple, and the Brahma temple. The Parsvanath temple is the largest of the Jain temples. It is famous for its beautiful sculptures depicting celestial beauties in several postures. The Adinath temple is dedicated to the Jain Tirthankara Adinath. It is lavishly embellished with sculpted figures, including that of yakshis. The Ghantai temple is also a Jain temple. It is famous for its ornamental depiction of the 16 dreams of Mahavira's mother, and a Jain goddess on a winged Garuda.

The Brahma temple, the Vamana temple, the Hanuman temple, and the Javari temple are the Hindu temples in this group. The Brahma temple is known for its four-faced image of Brahma, while the Vamana temple is adorned on its outer walls with carvings of apsaras or celestial maidens. There is a Hanuman temple that is renowned for the colossal statue of Hanuman, about 2.5m high, while the Javari temple has a richly carved gateway that will take your breath away.

Adinath Temple



Which are the Western Group of temples in Khajuraho?

The Western Group of temples at Khajuraho includes the Kandariya Mahadeo temple, Chaunsat Yogini temple, Chitragupta temple, Lakshamana temple, Matangeswara temple, and Varaha temple.

The Kandariya Mahadeo temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, is the largest of Khajuraho temples, reaching a height of 31 metre. The earliest surviving shrine in this group is the Chaunsat Yogini temple. The Lakshmana temple is renowned for the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, along with goddess Lakshmi- and also for the remarkable three-headed idol of Vishnu's incarnations.

The Chitragupta temple is dedicated to the Sun God and is famed for the three-headed idol of Lord Brahma. The Matangeswara temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, while the Viswanath Temple is known for its impressive pathway, flanked by sculptures of lions and elephants. A nine-foot high boar-incarnation of Lord Vishnu is the unique feature of the Varaha temple. Together, these temples reflect the grandeur of the architecture of the times, and the skill of the artisans.



Khajuraho Dance Festival



Tell Me Why



Khajuraho Dance Festival

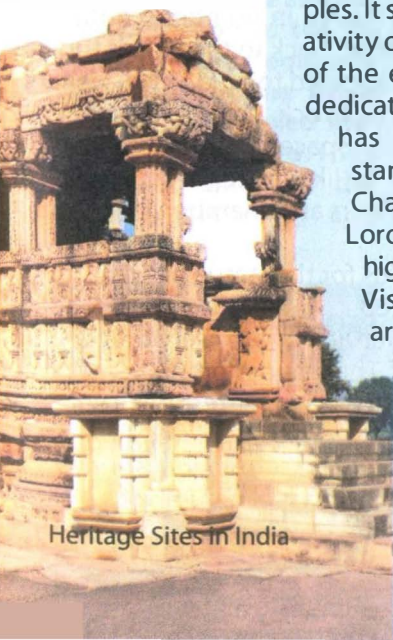
The Khajuraho Dance Festival is a yearly event that takes place at the

open-air auditorium in front of the Chitragupta temple dedicated to the Sun God, and the Vishwanatha temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. India's finest artists come from the various states to participate in the festival, which draws flocks of tourists eager to experience the majesty and delicacy, the emotional depth and technical skill, the throbbing rhythms, and sensuous grace of the different forms of Indian classical dance.

Which are the temples of the Southern Group at Khajuraho?

The Southern Group of temples consists of only two temples - the Duladeo temple, and the Chaturbhuj temple. The Dhuladeo, located south of the Jain enclosure, was constructed well after the other temples. It shows the influence of waning creativity of the artists, for it lacks the beauty of the earlier temples in Khajuraho. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva, and its façade has repetitions of the images of a standing Shiva and Shiva-Parvati. The Chaturbhuj temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It has a massive 2.7 metres high, intricately carved image of Lord Vishnu, in Chaturbhuj - or four-armed form. It looks similar to the Duladeo temple except for its size, which is smaller. Generally speaking, this group of temples is not as impressive as the earlier shrines.

Lakshman Temple



Elephanta Caves

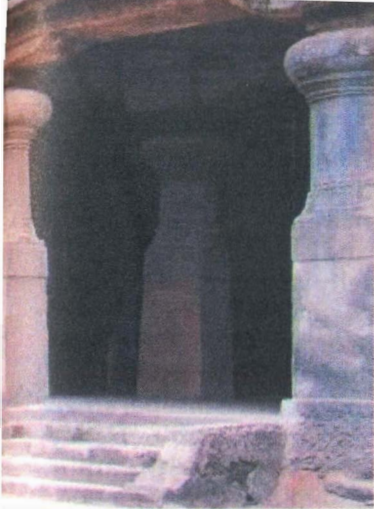


Elephanta Caves

Why are the Elephanta Caves considered to be one of the most perfect expressions of Indian art?

Across the sea from the Gateway of India in Mumbai, lies the island of Elephanta, home to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Elephanta Caves. These caves- seven in number- contain rock cut temples dating back to the 5th century A D. The temples, dedicated to Lord Shiva, were created by carving out rock, and creating the columns, the internal spaces and the images. The entire temple is like a huge sculpture, through whose corridors and chambers one can walk.

Elephanta is famous for the statue of Trimurti. Here, Shiva is depicted in the three moods as the creator, the destroyer and the preserver. It is a masterpiece in itself. The temple complex covers an area of about 5574 square metres, and it consists of a main chamber and two lateral ones, courtyards, and several subsidiary shrines. Above the temple is the mass of natural rock.



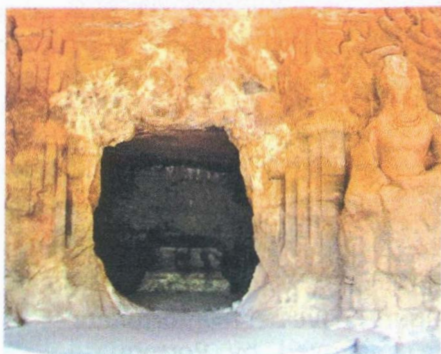
What was Elephanta's fate at the hands of the Portuguese?

There are no elephants in Elephanta! The name was given by the Portuguese as there was a large elephant sculpture in the island, when it was held by them. Otherwise this island was known as Gharapuri. Elephanta Island is known for its great cave shrine, excavated in the 6th century. The island lies 10 km northeast to Apollo Bunder, or Gateway of India



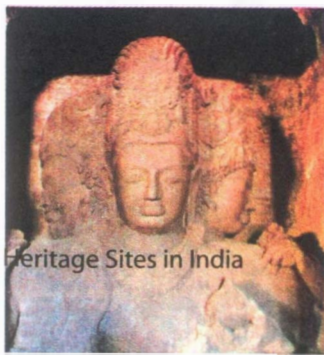
Three Headed Shiva

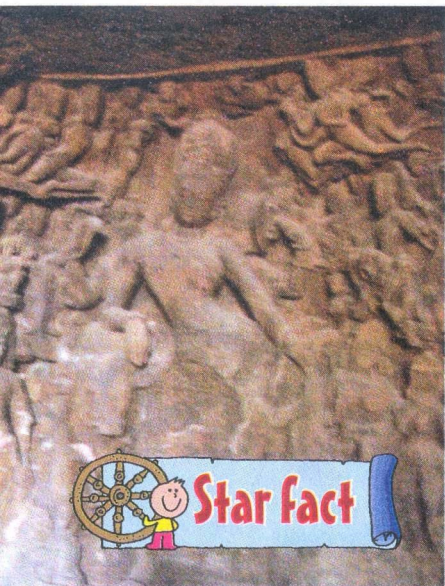
The centrepiece and the star attraction of the Elephanta Cave Temple is the image of the three headed Shiva called Mahesh, the great Lord. They represent Shiva as the Creator, Protector, and Destroyer.



A Cave at Elephanta

in Mumbai. The island came under the rule of at least half a dozen powers over the centuries. They include the Mauryas of Konkan, Trikutakas, Chalukyas of Badami, Silaharas, Rashtrakutas, Kalyani Chalukyas, Yadavas of Deogiri, Shahi dynasty of Gujarat, the Portuguese, the Marathas, and also the British. It is considered to be the glorious abode of



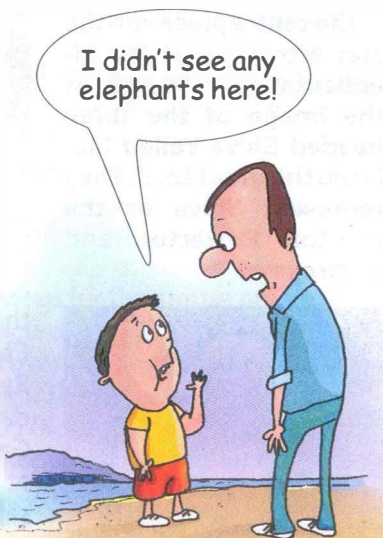


Ardhanariswara

Lord Shiva. Many of the carved figures have been unfortunately destroyed by Portuguese. They turned the pillared hall into a shooting gallery, and let the famous stone elephant fall to pieces. The broken pieces of the great elephant structure in black stone, were removed in 1864 by the British with the intention of taking them to England. However, the statue was later returned to India, and now stands at the Victoria Gardens in Mumbai.

Ardhanariswara

Another popular sculpture at the Elephanta Caves is that of Ardhanariswara. Ardhanariswara is Shiva in his half male and half female form. This deity is composed of Shiva and his consort Shakthi. The Ardhanari form also illustrates how the female principle of God and Shakti, is inseparable from the male principle of God and Shiva. 'Ardhanarishwara' is a combination of three words 'Ardha', 'Nari' and 'Ishwara' means 'half', 'woman' and 'lord' respectively, which when combined means the lord whose half is woman.



Tell Me Why

Chola Temples

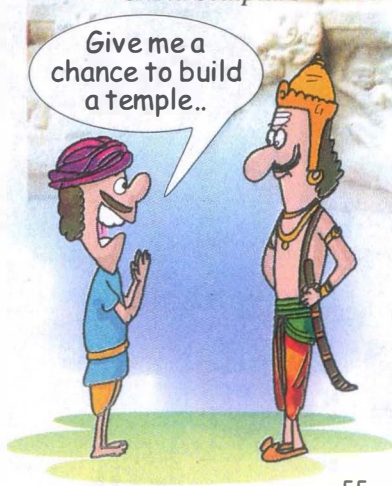
Why are the Chola kings considered to be great patrons of architecture?

The Chola Empire stretched over all South India and the neighbouring islands. The period of the Chola dynasty was described as the golden age of Tamil culture. The rulers of this great empire built magnificent temples. The great temple of Tanjore was built in a few years, from 1003 to 1010, during the reign of the great king Rajaraja, the true founder of the Chola Empire. The major temples are the Brihadiswara temple at Thanjavur, the temple of Gangaikondacholisvaram and the Airavateswara temple at Darasuram. The whole combined site is known as the Great Living Chola Temples.

The Imperial rulers of Chola Empire had developed the Dravidian style of temple architecture almost to perfection. A special feature of Chola architecture is the purity of artistic tradition. The Brihadiswara temple was declared by UNESCO as a World Heritage site in the year 1987. The temple of Gangaikondacholisvaram and the Airavateswara temple were added as extensions to the site in 2004.



Chola Sculpture





Curious Fact

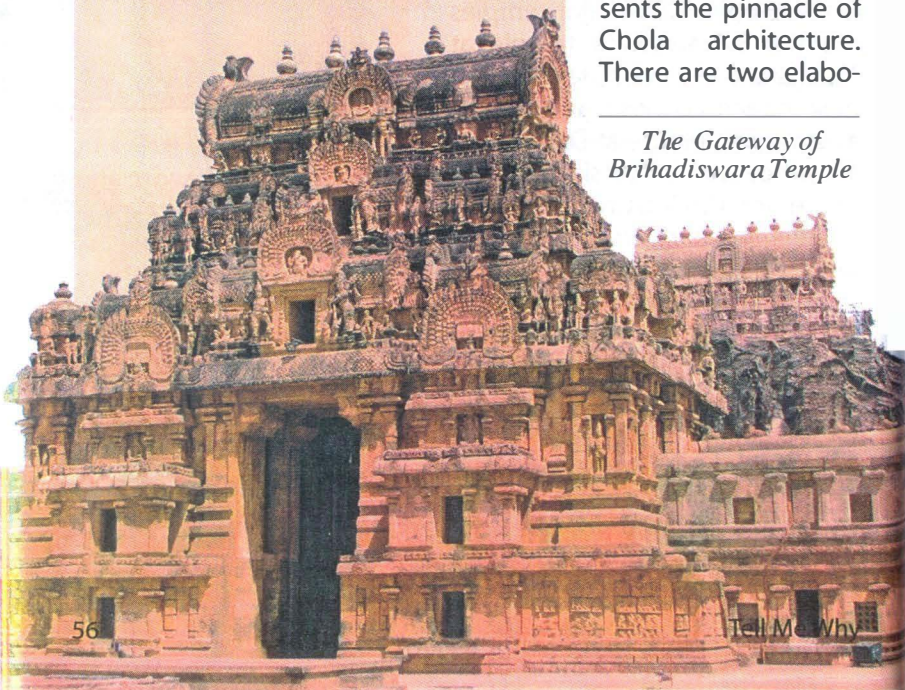
Richest Temple

The Brihadiswara temple was one of the richest temples of its time. Its wealth came from a lavish gift of immense quantities of gold by Rajaraja Chola. In addition, the temple received revenue from many villages, and owned vast tracts of land and herds of cattle- all of which were sources of a handsome income. Of course, there were also donations of money from individuals- and gifts of jewellery for the idols.

Why is the Brihadiswara temple considered as the masterpiece of Chola architecture?

The Brihadiswara temple was built in the wondrous city of Tanjore by the great Chola king Rajakesari Rajaraja. The temple was consecrated in 1010 AD- and to this day, all the rituals and festivals have continued uninterrupted. This temple represents the pinnacle of Chola architecture. There are two elabo-

*The Gateway of
Brihadiswara Temple*





The Vimana of Brihadiiswara Temple

The vimana is the tower over the sanctum of the main deity. At the Brihadiiswara temple, the vimana is 62 metres tall and has a single 80 tonne block of granite on top of it. The granite block was installed by building a 6.5 kilometres long ramp, and using elephants and enormous wooden blocks.

rately carved towers or gopurams that lead to a huge inner courtyard that is dominated by the huge statue of Nandi, the sacred bull of Lord Shiva. The courtyard is surrounded by a massive granite wall, with 1008 statues of Nandi. The central shrine has a massive shiva lingam in black granite. There are galleries for the devout to circle the deity, and one of the won-

ders of the temple is a single stone weighing 80 tonnes, that has been placed atop the temple, without a crane to lift it! What is truly inspiring is not just its massive structure, but the microscopic attention to measurements and detail, at a time when precision tools were unknown. Another amazing fact is that the shadow of the temple never falls on the ground!



Which are the other temples of Chola period?

The Great Living Chola temples include three great 11th and 12th century temples. They are the Brihadiiswara temple at Thanjavur, the Brihadiiswara temple at Gangaikondacholisvaram, and the Airavateswara temple at Darasuram. The temple of Gangaikondacholisvaram was built by Rajendra I. It was completed in 1035. It has a 53 metre high vimana with recessed corners, and a graceful upward curving movement. This is in contrast to the straight and severe tower at Thanjavur. The Airavateswara temple complex was built by Rajaraja II, at Darasuram. It has a 24 metre vimana, and a stone image of Shiva. Other temples include the temple of Devi, built in the 13th century by the Pandya king Konerinmaikondan, the temple of Subrahmanya, the temple of Ganesh, and the mandapa of Nataraja. All these temples represent outstanding creative achievements in the pure Dravidian form of architecture.



Bharatanatyam Gallery

A gallery at the Brihadiiswara temple has statues of Lord Shiva in various dance poses that are described in the ancient text on dance called the Natya sastra. There are 79 figures adorning this gallery, known as the Bharatanatyam Gallery.

Group of Monuments at Pattadakal

Who built the famous temples of Pattadakal?

Pattadakal is a small town in Karnataka that is renowned for its ancient temples. It was once the second largest city of the Chalukyas. It is said that the coronation of the Chalukya king was always held here. During the 7th and 8th centuries, the Chalukya rulers built the nine magnificent temples known as the Pattadakal temples.

These temples are interesting in that they display a rare blend of the South India style or Dravidian style of architecture, and the North Indian or Nagara style. Four of the temples are built in Dravidian style, four in Nagara style, and the fifth, the Papanatha temple illustrates a perfect synthesis of both styles. In the 8th century, the Rashtrakutas constructed the Kashiviswanatha temple which was built in the north Indian style. The Galganatha temple is famous for its sculpture of Lord Shiva killing the demon Andhakasura. Kasi Visweswara is another temple that boasts of the Nagara style of architecture. Owning to its incredible temples, Pattadakal was titled a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1987.

Monuments at Pattadakal



The Papanatha Temple

The Papanatha temple follows the North Indian, or Nagara style of architecture. It is believed that it was originally dedicated to the worship of Vishnu and the Sun God Surya. It has bulky pillars and earthy decorations. The carvings on the wall of the temple include different figures. Scriptures of Lord Shiva along with Goddess Parvathi are present on the ceilings of the temple, along with decorative carvings on the temple walls. Some of the unique designs and carvings on the external portion of the temple include elephant figures and scenes from the epic Ramayana.



I need a great victory to construct a temple..



What are the architectural features of the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples?

The Virupaksha temple of Pattadakal reflects the grandeur of the Early Chalukyan architecture. This temple was built to commemorate the victory of the Chalukyas over the Pallavas of Kanchipuram. The temple was built by Queen Lokamahadevi, queen of the then ruling king Vikramaditya II. The temple is probably the largest and most sophisticated temple the Early Chalukyas ever attempted. The Chalukyas took inspiration from the Kailas-



Virupaksha Temple

anatha temple of Kan-chipuram.

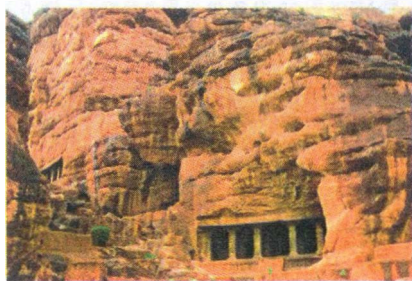
The Mallikarjuna temple was built by Queen Lokamahadevi's sister. She was also queen of Vikramaditya II, and built for the same purpose—to commemorate the victory of the Chalukyas over the Pallavas. This magnificent temple is noted for the exquisitely carved figures on its walls, and the massive square pillars in sand stone. It is similar to the Virupaksha temple, and is comparatively smaller in size. Like the Virupaksha temple, it too is a tribute to the architectural genius of the Chalukyan rulers.

Heritage Sites in India



Badami

Badami is famous for its cave temples that are located in a red sandstone cliff. It is picturesquely situated at the mouth of a ravine, between two rocky hills. The temples are dedicated to Vishnu and Shiva. Of the four temples, the first three belong to the Vedic faith, and the fourth and natural cave is the only Buddhist temple in Badami.



Badami Cave Temple



Aihole

Aihole has around 70 buildings, some of which are truly striking. Aihole was the regional capital of the Chalukyas, and the Durga temple there has a round sanctum that suggests the influence of Buddhism.



Sunderbans National Park

Sunderbans



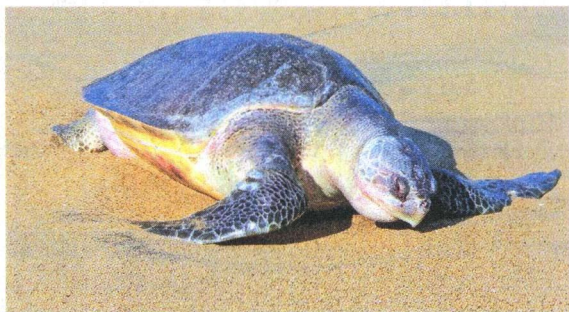
Why is Sunderbans unique?

Sunderbans is a national park, UNESCO World Heritage site, and a tiger reserve in West Bengal. It is located at the southern tip of West Bengal, where the land meets the sea. The Sunderbans covers a vast area of 4264 square kilometres in India alone, and forms part of the world's largest delta created by the mighty rivers Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna. Situated on the lower end of Gangetic West Bengal, it is criss-crossed by hundreds of creeks and tributaries. The land is constantly being changed, moulded, and



shaped by the action of the tides. About half of the Sundarbans is under water, and the rest of the landscape is characterized by low-lying mangroves, alluvial islands, and mud banks, with sandy beaches and dunes along the coast.

There is a rich variety of wild life in the Sundarbans. The Indian Sundarbans forms the largest tiger reserve and national park in India,



Olive Ridley Sea Turtle

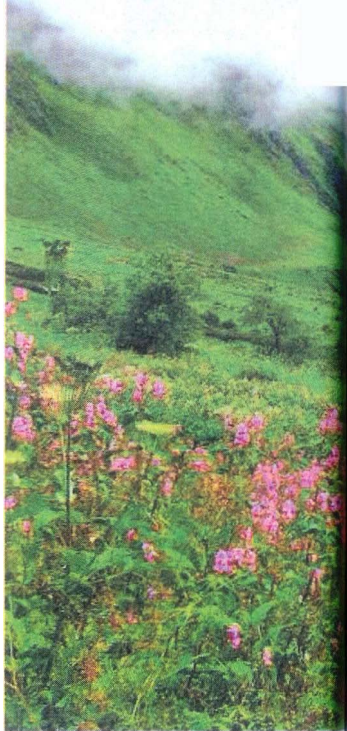


*Blue Eared
Kingfisher*

and is home to more than 250 tigers. Chital deer, rhesus monkeys and other forms of wild life abound. The marine life includes a variety of fishes, red fiddler crabs, and hermit crabs. Sundarbans is also noted for its conservation of the Ridley sea turtle. An incredible variety of wild reptiles is found here, including the king cobra, rock python, and water monitor. The endangered river terrapin, batagur baska is found on the Mechua beach, while the barking deer is found only in Holiday Island in Sundarbans. Sundarbans is a heaven for birdwatchers too, and the list includes such rare species as the masked finfoot, mangrove pitta, and the mangrove whistler.

Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks

*Musk
Deer*



Snow Leopard

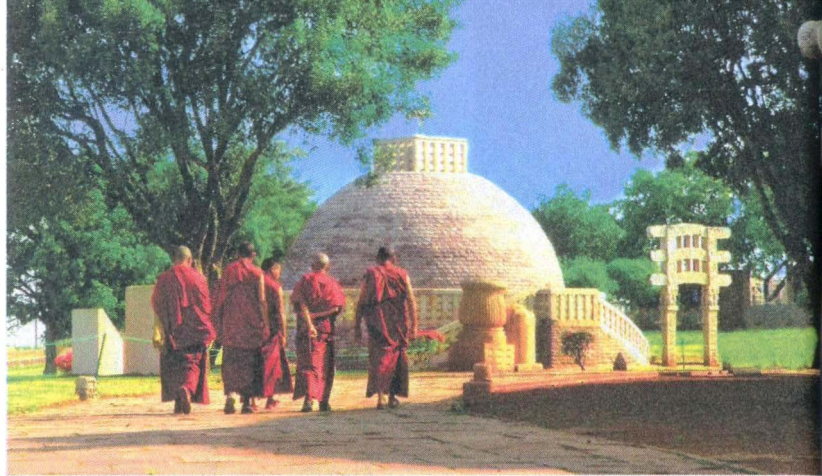
What makes Nandadevi and the Valley of Flowers National Parks special?

The Nanda Devi National Park is located in the upper Himalayan ranges in the state of Uttarakhand. The Nanda Devi Mountain, which is the second highest peak in India soars to over 7,800 metres, and dominates the park on three sides. The area is a vast glacial basin, divided by a series of parallel ridges that rise up to the encircling mountain rim. It is uninhabited by Man, but is the habitat of several endangered mammals, especially the snow leopard, Himalayan musk deer and the bharal. The park is



covered with high altitude flora such as fir, birch, rhododendron, and juniper. It is also famous for its Valley of Flowers, which offers you breathtaking vistas of endless meadows, surrounded by insurmountable snow-capped peaks. The gentle landscape of the Valley of Flowers National Park complements the rugged mountain wilderness of Nanda Devi National Park. Flowers carpet the entire valley- including alpine species that are found only here- and the leaves form a porous umbrella. This richly diverse area is also home to rare and endangered animals, including the Asiatic black bear, snow leopard, brown bear, and blue sheep. Together with the Valley of Flowers, Nanda Devi National Park has been designated as an UNESCO World Heritage site since the year 1988.

*Valley of
Flowers
National
Park*



Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi

I am trying to
read the stupa's
history...



Why is Sanchi an important Buddhist site?

Sanchi, in Madhya Pradesh, is world famous for the ruins of stupas, temples, and monasteries that lie scattered across a lonely hill. It is the largest and oldest Buddhist sanctuary in India.

The stupa was originally a burial or reliquary mound, but later became a purely symbolic structure. In the beginning, stupas were built over the relics of Lord Buddha. Later, the Emperor Ashoka built over 84,000 stupas. The Great Stupa at Sanchi is one of the oldest in India.

Sanchi continued to flourish after the Mauryas, through several later dynasties. Magnificent gateways were constructed by successive rulers, four images of Buddha were added, and more monasteries and temples were built. With the gradual disappearance of Buddhism from India, the ruins of Sanchi lay forgotten, until they were discovered by an Englishman, General Tyler, in 1818.



*Panoramic
View of
Sanchi*

From Pillar to Press

The Ashoka Pillar at Sanchi is a beautifully proportioned structure. After the discovery of the ruins by General Taylor in 1818, there was a mad scramble to unearth more relics, and many of the monuments were found to be badly damaged. In fact, the Ashoka pillar was being used by a local landowner as a sugarcane press!

Why is the Great Stupa of Sanchi of great significance?

The best known, and most elaborate amongst the stupas at Sanchi is the Great Stupa. It is part of an entire complex of structures, mostly stupas, built between the 3rd century BC and the 12th Century AD. The stupa evolved from being a structure built over the relics of Buddha and his followers, to a symbol of the Buddha himself. More exactly, it became a symbol of his final release from the cycle of birth and rebirth. The Great Stupa, like other stupas, is a hemispherical dome. Its hemispherical shape represents the world egg. Stupas commonly rest on a square pedestal, and are carefully aligned with the four cardinal points of the compass. The Great Stupa has a three tiered umbrella or parasol on top. The so-called 'parasols,' set one above the other, along the shaft emerging from its uppermost region, represent a heavenly hierarchy.



*Northern Gateway
of the Sanchi Stupa*

Other Stupas

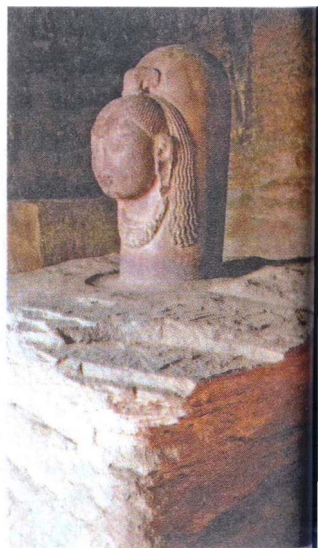
The hillside at Sanchi is scattered with many stupas, both big and small. There is a stupa known as Stupa 2, which today consists only of a carved balustrade. The stupa known as Stupa 3 has relics inside large stone boxes that were discovered by the archaeologist Sir Alexander Cunningham. The Sanchi stupas are noteworthy for their gateways, as they contain ornamental depictions of incidents from the life of the Buddha and his previous incarnations.

The Great Stupa of Sanchi is the oldest stone structure in India. It was commissioned by the Emperor Ashoka the Great in the 3rd century BC. It underwent a complete reconstruction after wanton damage inflicted upon it in the middle of the second century BC. The reconstruction consisted of a stone casing, balustrades, a paved processional path and an umbrella and railing. Four elaborately carved gateways were added in the first century BC.



Udayagiri Caves

The Udayagiri Caves are situated about 13 kilometres from Sanchi. Udaygiri is a Sanskrit word meaning 'sunrise hill'. The Udayagiri Caves are a group of rock-cut caves sanctuaries carved into a sandstone hill that stands sentinel-like on the horizon. An inscription in one of these caves states that it was carved during the reign of Chandragupta II.



*Udayagiri Caves -
An Inside View*

Humayun's Tomb



Humayun

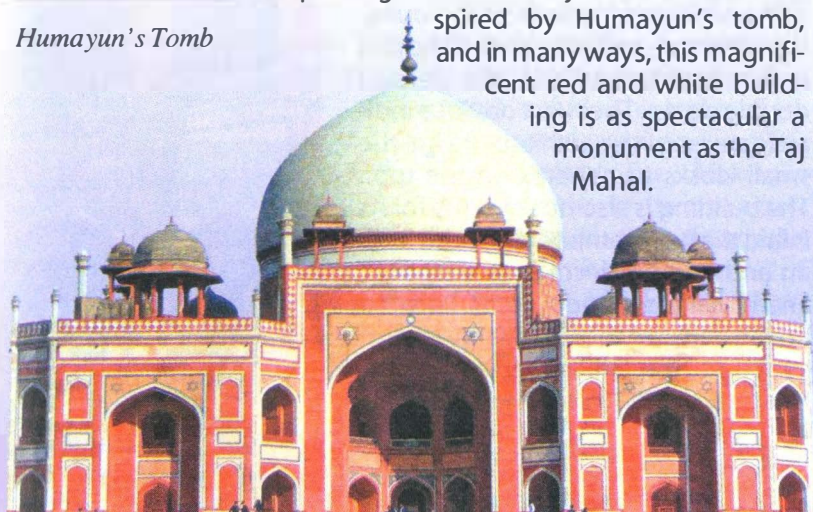
Why is Humayun's tomb of cultural importance?

The Mughal Emperor Humayun was the son of Babur who established the Mughal dynasty in India. Most of Humayun's time was spent in continuous warfare, and he had little time for intellectual or cultural pursuits. Humayun ruled India for a decade, but was exiled. Eventually, he took refuge with the Shah of Persia, who helped him regain Delhi in 1555, the year before his death. He died in 1556, and his Persian wife, Hamida Begum, supervised the construction of her husband's tomb in Delhi, from 1562-1572. The architect, Mirak Mirza Ghiyath, was also a Persian.

Humayun's tomb is the first distinct example of the pure Mughal style, which was inspired by Persian architecture. It is also the first of a series of grand tombs surrounded by exquisite gardens. The Taj Mahal has been in-

spired by Humayun's tomb, and in many ways, this magnificent red and white building is as spectacular a monument as the Taj Mahal.

Humayun's Tomb

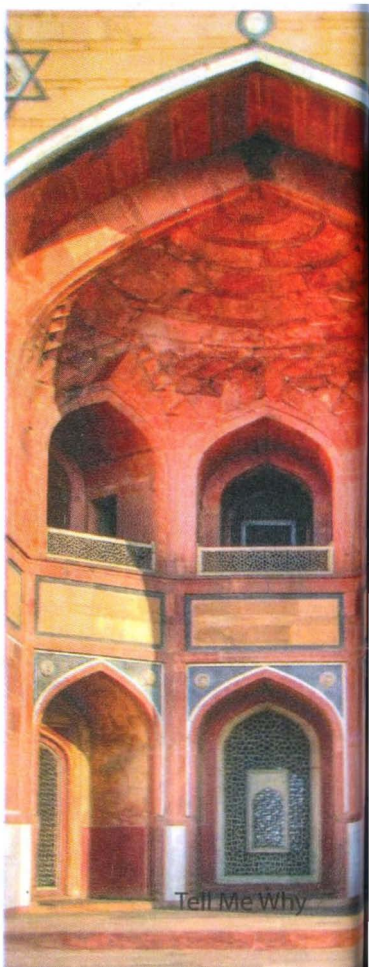


What are the architectural features of Humayun's tomb?

Humayun's tomb stands as a landmark in the development of Mughal architecture, and also represents the earliest example of the Mughal concept of a garden tomb, with causeways and channels. This awe inspiring monument took almost nine years to complete, and cost nearly one and a half million rupees. The mausoleum is a 42 metres high structure with a central dome. The double-layered dome has a white marble exterior, but the rest of the tomb is made of red sandstone, with white marble ornamentation. It is set in a geometrically arranged garden, criss-crossed by numerous water channels. Such typical Persian gardens had been introduced into India by Babur. Later, they would be found in the Red Fort in Delhi, and at the Taj Mahal in Agra.

The architectural form of the building is Persian, and this tomb is the first Indian building to use the Persian double dome. The most obvious Indian features of the architecture are the small kiosks or chhatris on the roof. The building is also noteworthy for its inlaid tile work, embodying both Indian and Persian decorative elements, and its carved stone screens. Located on the banks of the River Yamuna, this structure was declared a UNESCO Heritage site in 1993.

Exterior Arch of Humayun's Tomb



Tell Me Why



Curious Fact

Bahadur Shah and Humayun's Tomb

The last emperor of the Mughal dynasty, Bahadur Shah II, sought refuge in the tomb of his ancestor Humayun during the uprising of 1857. He was later captured here by a British officer, Lieutenant Hudson, and this marked the end of Mughal rule.



Tomb of Isa Khan

Which are the other monuments in the compound of Humayun's tomb?

There are many other small monuments inside the compound of Humayun's tomb. There is an impressive square tomb, with a double dome, that was believed to have been built for the Emperor's favourite barber. A picturesque gateway leads to a walled enclosure called Arab Ki Sarai. It was built by Humayun's widow for the 300 Arab merchants that had returned with her, from her pilgrimage to Mecca. Other monuments include the tomb of Isa Khan, a nobleman, and Bu Halima's garden. The Afsarwala tomb and Masjid are also a part of the complex. Both the masjid and the tomb are in honour of an afsar, or officer. The Afsarwala tomb has a grave with the date 974 marked on it, that corresponds to 1566-67.

This is Humayun's tomb. 'It's the grandfather of the Taj Mahal!'



Qutb Minar

Why is the Qutb Minar an important heritage site?

Qutb Minar

The Qutb Minar was built by Sultan Qutbu'd Din Aibak. The work started in 1202, and was completed by his successor Muhammed bin Sam. It is 72.5 metres tall, and to reach the top, one would have to climb 379 steps, five times a day!

The conical tower is an exquisite example of Indo-Islamic Afghan architecture. The base of the Qutb Minar measures 14.32 metres, and the top of the structure measures

A Stampede at the Qutb Minar

The stairs inside the Qutb coil so steeply that they're enough to make the hardest climber dizzy and claustrophobic. In 1979, a stampede occurred during a school trip. The lights failed, and the children panicked. The resultant stampede caused a number of deaths. The inside of the tower has since been closed to visitors.





Curious Fact

Qutb Minar and Lightning Hits

The Qutb Minar has been hit by lightning a couple of times. In 1368, Tughlaq commissioned repairs to the Qutb Minar after a lightning strike. In 1503, Sikander Lodi had similar structural repairs carried out. To resolve the problem of lightning strikes, a large number of iron clamps, in the form of cylindrical inserts, were added to reinforce the stone joints. These iron clamps acted both as dowels and lightning conductors, and the Qutb Minar stand to this day in all its grandeur.

2.75 metres. It is five storeys high. Each storey has a different design theme, and balconies project from each story. These balconies are supported on elaborately carved and inscribed brackets. Verses from the holy Koran are carved on its sandstone walls.

The Qutb Minar was the symbol of the might of the Turko Afghan Slave Dynasty- a dynasty whose first kings were slaves who later became kings. The Qutb Minar is a World Heritage site and has survived the ravages of time impressively.

A Close-up view of the Qutb Minar

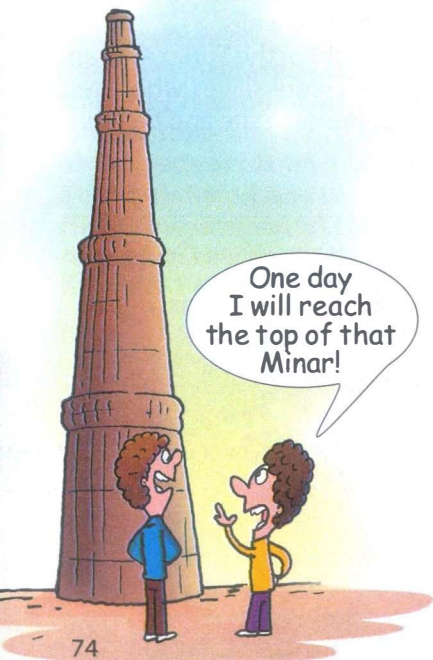




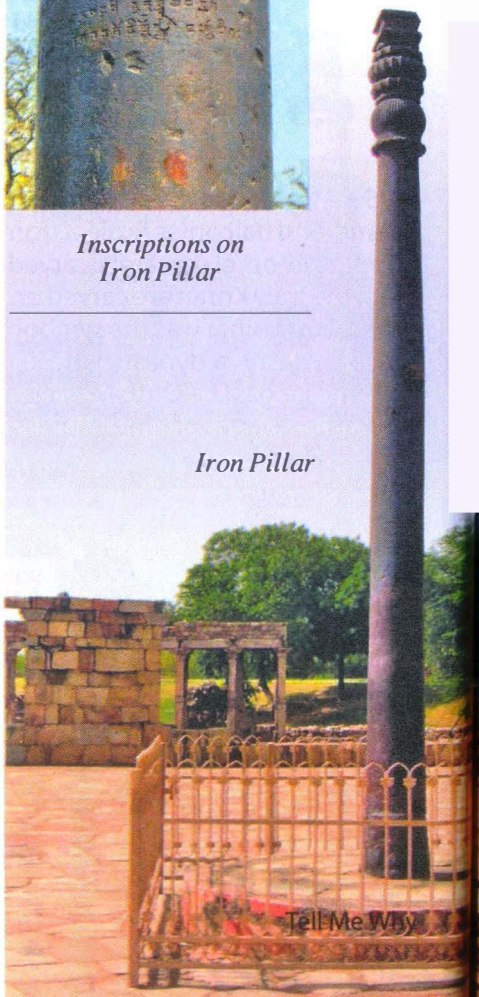
The Tomb of Iltutmish

The tomb of Iltutmish was built by the ruler Iltutmish himself in 1235. It lies in the extension that he had added to the Quwwatul Islam Masjid, and is rather plain on the outside. The inside, however, is covered with exquisitely carved inscriptions from the holy Koran.

● *Sneha Rao*



*Inscriptions on
Iron Pillar*




Iron Pillar

Why is the iron pillar near the Qutb amazing?

A famous iron pillar, belonging to the 4th century, stands in the courtyard of the Qutb Minar. The Sanskrit inscription

tells us that this pillar was originally set up as a flag pole, or 'dhvajastambha', of Lord Vishnu on the hill known as 'Vishnupada'. It was a tribute to King Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty. It is also suggested that a deep hole on the top of the pillar was used to fit the image of 'Garuda' as the vehicle of Lord Vishnu.

The iron pillar is believed to have been brought to Delhi by Anangpal, the Tomar king. The base of the pillar is tied to its foundations by small pieces of iron. It rises to a height of 7.20 metres, with 93 centimetres buried below the present floor level. What is truly amazing about this pillar is that the iron has not rusted despite the seventeen centuries that have passed. The pillar is an excellent example of advanced metallurgy of those times, and is a marvel in itself.

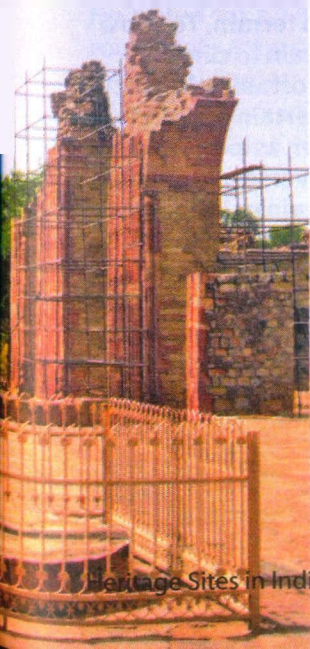


I'm planning to sell this pillar. Are you interested in buying it?



Alai Darwaza

Alai Darwaza is the gateway to the Quwwatul Mosque that was built in 1131 by Alauddin Khilji. It is built of red sandstone, and has arched openings on all sides. The interior is intricately carved with geometric symbols and inscriptions.





Mountain Railways

Which are the mountain railways in India included in the World Heritage list?

There are three mountain railways in India that are included in the World Heritage List. The first is the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. It was opened in 1881. This railway applied bold and innovative engineering solutions to the problem of establishing an effective rail link across a mountainous terrain. The second is the Nilgiri Mountain Railway which is 46 kilometres long, metre gauge single track railway in Tamil Nadu. The third railway is the Kalka Shimla Railway. It is a 96 kilometres long, single track rail link built in the mid-19th century to provide a service to the mountain town of Shimla.

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway



Loops and Z Reverses

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway passes through very steep terrain. To allow the train to climb comfortably, the track has certain features known as loops and Z-Reverses. In a loop, the train gains height by circling around and tracing the natural contours of the hill. In a Z-reverse, the train first moves forward, then reverses, and then moves forward again, and each time it does so, it climbs a slope and gains height.

Tell Me Why



Why is the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway placed first in the list?

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was laid to connect Darjeeling with Siliguri. The project was a tough one, because of the inability of the little narrow gauge engines to raise enough steam pressure at a continuous volume, when the train was climbing uphill. It was Franklin Prestage, an agent of the Eastern Bengal railway, who brought the proposal to reality. He opted for a z-shaped zigzag route, not just once, but six times in the 82 kilometre stretch from Siliguri to Darjeeling. There are six reverses and three loops on the line.

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway passes through thirteen stations during its journey. One of these, Ghoom, is the second highest railway station in the world, at an altitude of 2258 metres.

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is also affectionately known as the Toy Train. It affords breathtaking vistas as it chugs uphill, of high waterfalls, green valleys, and finally, a breathtaking view of the snow-capped Kanchenjunga range.

Panoramic View of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Station



'Toy Train', Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.



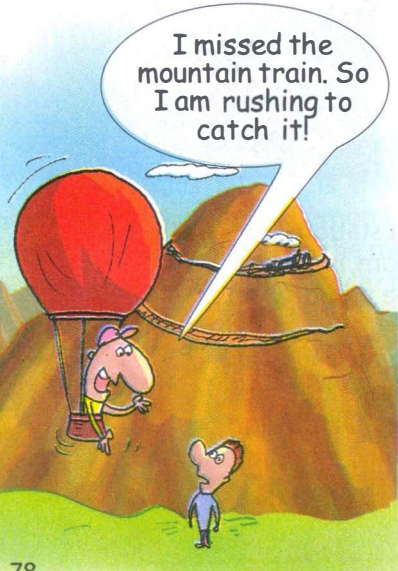
Locomotives in the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

A total of 34 steam locomotives were built for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, but by 2005, only 12 remained in use. At present, four diesel locomotives are in use. One steam locomotive has been taken out of India. It was in an American museum for many years, but was sold to an enthusiast in the UK, and restored to working order.

What do we know about the Kalka Shimla Railway?

The Kalka Shimla Railway was built during the time of British colonial rule to link the summer residences of the British with the capital in Delhi. It is one of the four narrow gauge rail routes on hill terrain in the country.

Started during the reign of Lord Curzon in November 1903, this rail route features in the Guinness Book of World Records for offering the steepest rise in altitude in the space of 96 kilometres. More than two-thirds of the track is curved, sometimes at angles as sharp as 48 degrees! It passes through 103 tunnels, across more than 800 bridges and viaducts. The climb is arduous, and the little 'toy train' as it is affectionately called, takes almost 5 hours to make its way up almost 4800 feet from Kalka to Simla.

A cartoon illustration of a man with a large nose and a yellow shirt, floating in a red hot air balloon. He is looking down at a small boy on the ground who is looking up at him. A speech bubble from the man says, "I missed the mountain train. So I am rushing to catch it!". In the background, there are brown mountains and a small train on a track.

I missed the mountain train. So I am rushing to catch it!

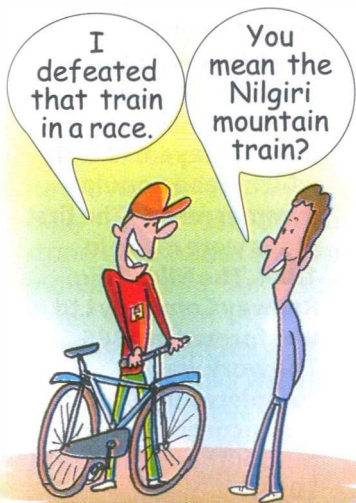


*Kalka Shimla
Railway*



Tunnels and Stations

The Kalka Shimla Railway runs through 103 tunnels! Most of the tunnels have not been changed till date. An interesting feature about these tunnels is that till today, whenever these tunnels have to be illuminated for maintenance, plain mirrors are used to catch the sunlight and reflect this light inside the tunnel.



Where is the Nilgiri Mountain Railway?

The Nilgiri Mountain Railway connects the hill station of Ooty (Udhagamandalam) to Mettupalayam, at the foot of the Nilgiris Mountains. The construction of this line was a big challenge, as the terrain is rather tricky. It was in 1854 that the first



Nilgiri Mountain Railway

plans were drawn up to build a mountain railway, but it was only 45 years later, in 1899, that the first train chugged up this track. The train covers the 46 kilometres to Ooty in four and a half hours. There are five stations between Mettupalayam and Coonoor and, at one time, there were five between Coonoor and Ooty too. Of these, four are still functional. The train, for obvious safety reasons, averages 10.4 kilometres per hour, and is perhaps the slowest in India. There are 208 curves and 13 tunnels, and 27 viaducts on the route. The terminus is at Ooty at 2,203 metres above sea level.



Track Record

The British wanted to build a railway up into the hills of Nilgiri, from Mettupalayam to Ooty, which was a popular summer resort. The first plans were made in 1854. The Nilgiri Rigi Railway Company Ltd was formed in 1885. The work was completed in 1908. It was incorporated into the Southern Railway in 1951.

Mahabodhi Temple

Why is the Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya an inspiring example of brick structures in India?

The Mahabodhi Temple literally means the 'Great Awakening Temple'. It is one of the four holy sites associated with the life of Lord Buddha. The temple is located in Bodh Gaya in Bihar, at the place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. The first temple was built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BC, and is one of the earliest Buddhist temples built entirely with brick, still standing in India. This temple has had great influence in the development of architecture over the centuries, especially in the use of sculpted stone balustrades and the memorial column. An inscription dated between the 1st and 2nd century AD. mentions that the temple of Ashoka was replaced by a new one. Several additions and alterations took place, and the present temple may have been built in the 6th century AD.

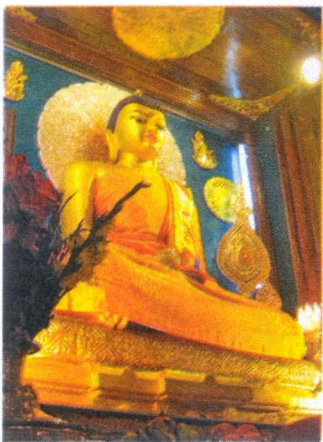
Heritage Sites in India





Decline of the Temple

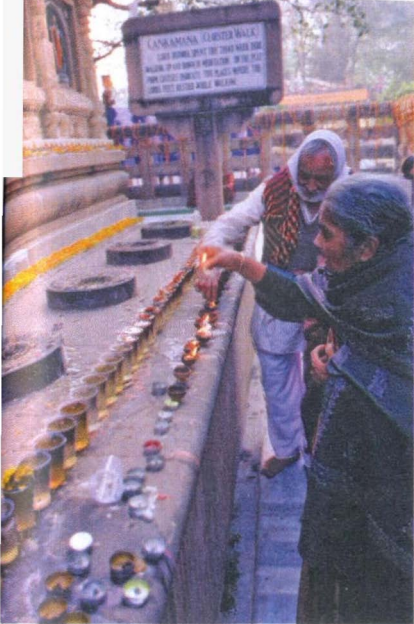
When the dynasties that were patrons of Buddhism went into decline, Buddhism declined too. During the 12th century, Bodh Gaya and the nearby regions were invaded by Muslim Turk armies. The Mahabodhi temple fell into disrepair, and was largely abandoned. During the 16th century, a Hindu monastery was established near Bodh Gaya, and the monastery's abbot claimed ownership of the Mahabodhi Temple grounds.



Statue of Buddha

Why is the Mahabodhi Temple associated with the life of Lord Buddha?

According to tradition, Siddhartha Gautama wandered all over the land seeking answers to the problems that were troubling him. He finally reached the city of Gaya around 530 BC. There, he sat in meditation under a sacred peepal tree, which later became renowned as the Bodhi tree. After days and nights of meditation, Gautama attained enlightenment, and knew the answers that he had sought- and was henceforth known as the Buddha or Enlightened One. The Mahabodhi temple marks the spot where this happened. The Buddha, then spent the next seven weeks at different spots in the vicinity of the Bodhi tree, meditating, and all these spots are considered to be sacred. But the holiest of holy places in the complex is, without doubt, the great Bodhi tree itself. It is supposed to be a direct descendant of the original Bodhi tree under which the Buddha spent his first week, and where he got enlightenment. The entire complex is located in the very heart of the city of Bodh Gaya.



Restoration

Restoration of the Mahabodhi Temple began in 1880 under the direction of Sir Alexander Cunningham. Later, control of the temple passed from the Hindu monks to the state government of Bihar. A temple management committee was formed, consisting of both Hindus and Buddhists, and it is they who keep the temple functioning smoothly now.

Devotees at Mahabodhi Temple

Two hundred and fifty years after the Buddha attained enlightenment, Emperor Ashoka visited Bodhi Gaya with the intention of establishing a monastery and a shrine. He built a diamond throne,

and attempted to place it at the exact spot where the Buddha attained Enlightenment. Today, it is the holiest pilgrimage site for the Buddhists around the world. The Mahabodhi Temple was declared as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2002.



Bhimbetka Rock Shelters

*Bhimbetka
Caves*

Who discovered the rock shelters of Bhimbetka?

At the foothills of the Vindhya Mountains are five clusters of natural rock shelters known as the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka. They are located in Madhya Pradesh, and lie within massive outcrops of sandstone, above dense forests. There are more than 700 rock shelters, of which over 400 of them are remarkable for the paintings they contain. These paintings reflect the traditions and culture of twenty one villages near the shelters. They also tell us a lot about the earliest human activities, be-

cause of the numerous stone tools including hand axes, cleavers, and also the pebble tools that have been found here. Bhimbetka was first mentioned in 1888 as a Buddhist site. The Bhimbetka Rock Shelters are, a natural art gallery, and an architectural treasure.

WOW!
What a
sketch!





Why has Bhimbetka been recognized as an UNESCO World Heritage site?

Man of Discovery

The Bhimbetka Rock Shelters were discovered by Vishnu Sridhar Wakankar, an archaeologist, in 1957. They were actually discovered by accident during a train ride that he undertook. In 1975, he was awarded the Padmashree award.

● *Radha Nair*

The word Bhimbetka is derived from the words 'Bhim ka bethika' which means 'the place where Bhim sat and meditated'. In ancient times, the region around Bhimbetka was closely associated with hunting and food gathering, as is evident from the paintings in the rock shelters. Thanks to their natural red and white pigments, the colours are remarkably well-preserved and, in certain caves, paintings of different eras adorn the same rock surface. Wild buffaloes, rhinoceroses, bears and tigers, hunting scenes, initiation ceremonies, childbirth, communal dancing, drinking sessions, religious rites and burials all come alive on the rock walls. The oldest paintings in white, often of huge animals, are probably up to 12,000 years old. Successive periods depict hunting tools, trade with the agricultural communities on the plains, and, still later, religious scenes involving tree gods. The rock formations themselves are visually stunning and these rock shelters are important both from the archaeologist's and the painter's point of view. Is it any wonder then that these rock shelters have been recognized as an UNESCO World Heritage site?



Champaner- Pavagadh Archaeological Park



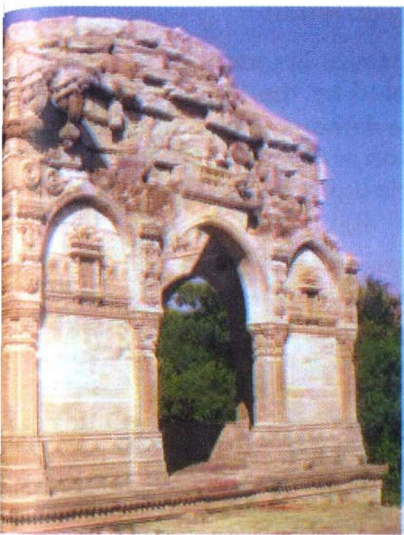
Why is the Champaner- Pavagadh Archaeological Park a perfect blend of Hindu and Muslim architecture?

The Champaner- Pavagadh Archaeological Park is the site of the regional capital city built by Mehmud Begda in the 16th century. Pavagadh Hill was a famous Hindu fortress under the Solanki kings of Gujarat, followed by Khichi Chauhans. In 1484, Sultan Mahmud Begarah took possession of the fort, and renamed it Muhammadabad. Today, it is a World Heritage site.

The park is located at the foot of, and around the Pavagadh Hill. At the top of the hill is the Kalikamata Temple which is considered to be an im-

Monuments at Champaner-Pavagadh

Tell Me Why



Monuments at Champaner Pavagadh

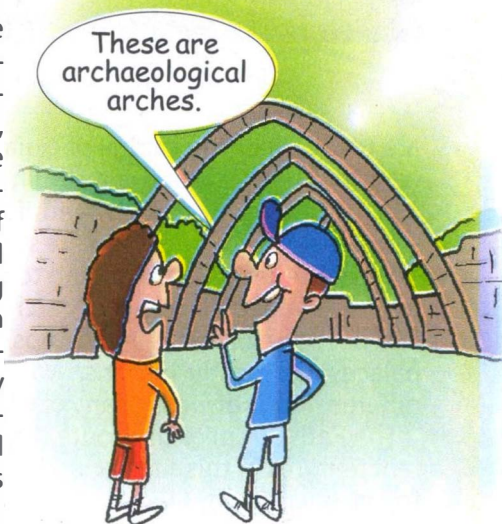
portant shrine, attracting large numbers of pilgrims throughout the year. The park also includes the Great Mosque, which inspired later mosque architecture in India. It is important because it is the site of the deserted city of Mahmud Begarah, as well as the living village of Champaner, which lies within the area of the historic town. In fact, it is the only complete and unchanged Islamic pre-Mughal city, and represents a culture that has long since disappeared.

Heritage Sites in India

Which are the important sites in the Champaner Pavagadh National Park?

The Champaner Pavagadh Archaeological Park is a collection of still largely unexcavated archaeological, historic and cultural heritage sites, situated in a hilly and beautiful landscape. The park is spread over three levels. The base is called Champaner, the top of the hill is called Pavagadh, and the area connecting both of them is called Marchi.

Excavations have unearthed ancient dwellings and full townships, palaces and ramparts, and religious buildings. There





Pavagadh Rulers

The Hindu kingdom of Pavagadh was ruled by the Khichi Chauhans, who were the descendants of the famous Prithviraj Chauhan. Later, Mehmud Begda, the grandson of Ahmed Shah, who established Ahmedabad, captured it. He built his own capital, Champaner, at the base of the hill.



Monuments at Champaner - Pavagadh

are the ruins of the capital of Gujarat state from the 15th century. The fortifications are built of massive sandstones and include bastions with beautiful balconies. Out of the massive ruins, five mosques are still in good condition.

There are temples belonging to different Hindu deities on the Pavagadh Hill. Military architecture includes walls and bastions, barracks and camps, as well as prisons. The palaces are mostly in ruins. Water installations include different kinds of wells, many of which are still in use!

The Patha or pilgrim's route is one of the most important features of this site. It climbs from the plateau to the top of Pavangadh Hill.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus

Why is the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus a fine example of Victorian Gothic architecture in India?

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, formerly known as Victoria Terminus in Mumbai, was designed by the British architect F.W. Stevens. It soon became the symbol of Bombay – now known as Mumbai. Bombay was a major international mercantile port city in the Indian subcontinent within the British Commonwealth. The terminal was built over ten years, starting in 1878, according to a High Victorian Gothic design based on late medieval Italian models. At the same time, its remarkable stone dome, turrets, pointed arches, and eccentric ground plan are close to traditional Indian palace architecture. It therefore represents Victorian Gothic Revival architecture in India, with a blend of themes derived from

Heritage Sites in India



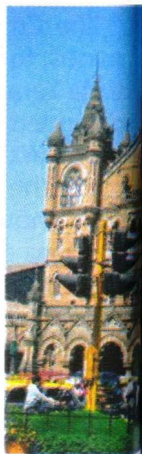
Indian traditional architecture

On 2nd July 2004, the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO nominated this magnificent specimen of late 19th century railway architecture as a World Heritage Site. This terminus is one of the rare specimens of the excellent fusion of traditional western and Indian architecture.



Why is the history of the terminus an interesting one?

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, or CST, is one of the historic structures in the Mumbai. It forms a very important part of the city's history too. The very site in which it is located is associated with the origins of Mumbai itself. Mumbai was an island that passed first into Portuguese, and later into British hands, in 1661. In



I'm going to Mumbai to visit CST.



1667, the island was transferred to the East India Company. As a result, the island became an important commercial centre. The town flourished, especially after the building of railway connections with the inland. The Governor of Bombay initiated a programme of land reclamation, and undertook the construction of magnificent Victorian public buildings along the seafront. The Victoria Terminus, the most impressive

of these buildings, was named after Queen Victoria, Empress of India, on whose Golden Jubilee it was formally opened in 1887.

CST was designed by the British architect Frederick William Stevens. Work began in 1878, and was completed 10 years later. The building was originally intended only to house

the main station and the administrative offices of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. Later, a number of ancillary buildings were added. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus is also the headquarters of the Central Railways of the country.

*Panoramic View of
Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus*



Terrorist Attack

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, or CST as it is popularly called, was the scene of a terrorist attack on November 26th, 2008. The attack began at 9.30 pm, when two men entered the passenger hall, and opened fire. The attack killed 58 people, and injured 104 others. One of the terrorists, Ajmal Kasab was caught alive and identified by eyewitnesses.

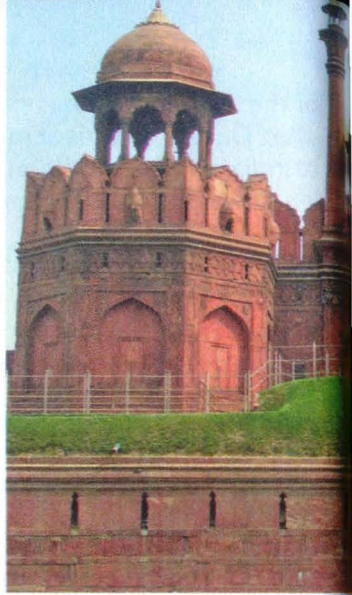
Red Fort Complex

Why does the Red Fort Complex have an outstanding universal value?

The fifth Mughal Emperor of India, Shah Jahan built a new capital which he named Shahjahanabad. Its palace fort was the Red Fort complex, which was so called because of its massive walls of red sandstone. The Red Fort is a tribute to the outstanding creativity of the Mughals, and each of its many pavilions reflects different aspects of Mughal architecture. There is a harmonious blend of Persian, Timurid, and Hindu elements - and the result is breathtaking.

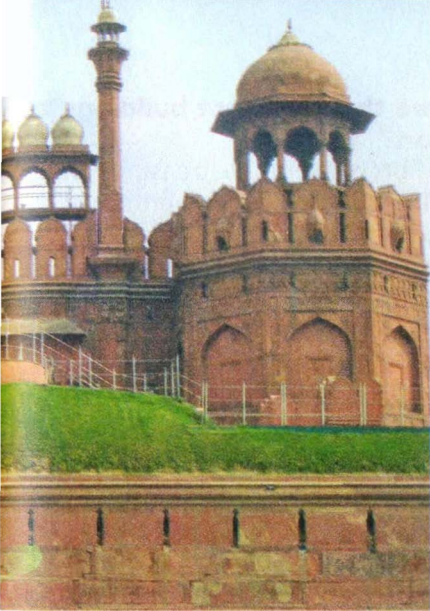
The Red Fort is considered to be of outstanding universal value, because it is representative of the architectural development initiated in 1526AD by the first Mughal Emperor, and splendidly refined by Shah Jahan with a fusion of three traditions.

The Red Fort has been a witness to many historic changes, and has been the setting for many stirring events that have had a long lasting, and sometimes permanent impact on the history of the nation.



Red Fort



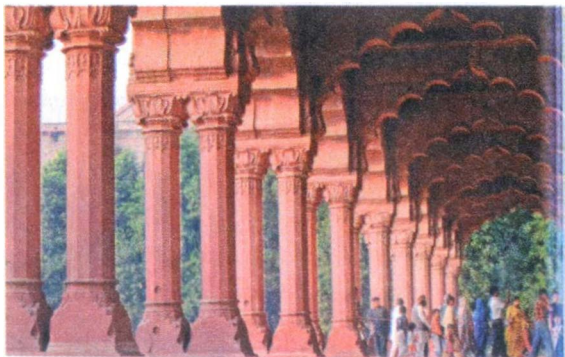


The Red Fort Today

Today, the Red Fort is a major tourist attraction in India, and a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Prime Minister of India addresses the nation on 15th August, the day India achieved independence from the British, from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

Why is the Red Fort different from other monuments?

The Red Fort Complex is different from other monuments in that it reflects both Mughal architecture and planning, as well as the manner in which the British used the forts. After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, when the fort was used as a headquarters, the British army occupied and destroyed many of its pavilions and gardens. One of the dramatic changes made by the British was the transformation of a river into a major road, and in the way they built a railway line that divided the Red Fort from the Salimgarh Fort. Today, the only structures remaining are those chosen for -preservation by the British.



Diwan-i-Aam

Which are the important buildings in the Red Fort?

The Red Fort is a veritable treasure house of magnificent buildings. The entrance to the Red Fort was through gateways, each of which was named according to the famous city that they faced. Thus, the gates had names like Lahori gate, Kashmiri gate, Kabul gate and Ajmeri gate. Inside, the fort was a city in itself, with its own shopping arcades, and gardens. Amongst the buildings, the Diwan-i- Aaam was the hall of public audience. The Diwan-i-Khas was the hall of private audience where the Emperor gave private audience to the courtiers and important guests. The Nehri-e- Behisht was a continuous channel of water that ran through the pavilions of the imperial apartments. Water for the channel was drawn from the Yamuna, from a tower known as the Shah Burj. The imperial private apartments lay behind the throne. The zenana was the women's quarters. It consisted of the Mumtaz Mahal and Rang Mahal. The Moti Masjid or pearl mosque was a later addition, The Hayat Bakhsh Bagh, was a large formal garden.

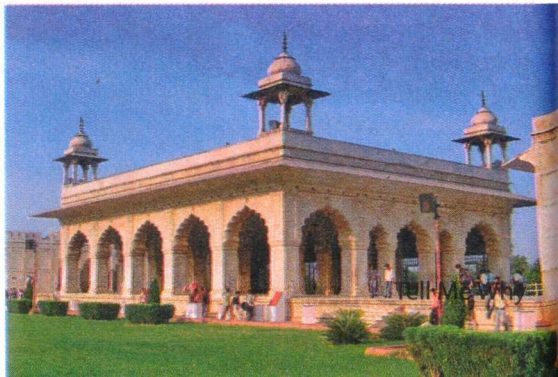


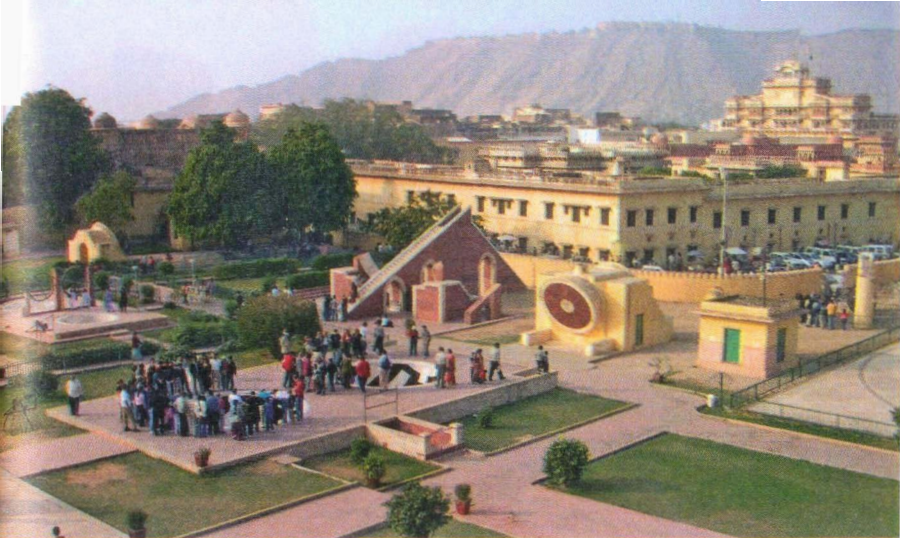
Residential Palace

The residential palace at the Red Fort is designed as an imitation of paradise. In fact, a couplet inscribed here reads "If there be a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here". The private apartments consisted of a row of pavilions connected by a continuous water channel, known as the Nahr-i-Behisht, or the stream of paradise.

● *DevNath*

Diwan-i- Khas





Jantar Mantar

Why is the Jantar Mantar in Jaipur important?

The Jantar Mantar is an astronomical observation site in Jaipur. It was built in the 18th century, and was designed for observations of the stars and their positions, with the naked eye. It has some twenty main fixed instruments, and includes several architectural and instrumental innovations. The Jantar Mantar is important because it is the most significant, and the best preserved of India's historic observatories. Moreover, it reflects the astronomical skills and cosmological concepts of the period. The Jantar Mantar's significance also lies in the fact that it is the ultimate culmination of a tradition known as Ptolemaic positional astronomy, which was shared by many civilizations. It was declared a World Heritage site for these reasons.



'Jantar Mantar'
literally means
calculation
instrument.

MANORAMA

Tell Me Why

Next issue



The Story of PETROLEUM

Why is a visit to the Jantar Mantar an inspiring experience?

The Jantar Mantar of Jaipur was built by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II. Between 1727 and 1734, the Maharajah had constructed five astronomical observatories in West Central India. The observatories, or 'jantar mantars' as they are commonly known, incorporate multiple buildings of unique form, each with a specialized function for astronomical measurement. The instruments are in most cases, huge structures. The Samrat Yantra, the largest instrument, is 27 metres high, and its shadow has been carefully plotted to tell the time of day. The small cupola on top was used as a platform for announcing eclipses and the arrival of monsoons. Built from local stone and marble, each instrument carries an astronomical scale, generally marked on the marble inner lining.

The observatory became a symbol of royalty, and was a meeting point for different scientific cultures. This gave rise to widespread social practices linked to cosmology. A visit to the Jantar Mantar is indeed an inspiring experience.

Heritage Sites in India

Clarifications & Corrections



It is our policy to correct errors, and present differing views and clarifications about the contents in previous issues. Please send in your feedback, mentioning the title and page number.

Ujwal D Jain, a student of class 4, Jain Heritage School, Bangalore, has pointed out a mistake in the May issue of Tell Me Why, 'Hunters of the Animal World'. He writes that on Page 90, 'Praying Mantis' is wrongly captioned as 'Grasshopper.'

Thank you Ujwal for your valuable feedback. Both the insects are shown below with correct captions.

-Editor

Praying Mantis



Grasshopper



I Wonder Why?

Question of the Month

Send us your questions

E mail:

childrensdivision@mmp.in



Why do we see rainbow colours on a CD?

A CD is made up of two layers of plastic, protecting a thin layer of aluminium. It has a series of dips organised in the form of concentric circular paths. When light waves fall on the CD, each of this aluminium paths scatters the light rays in different directions. When this scattering occurs, light waves from different circular planes mix with each other.

Light is a wave consisting of various colours in different wavelengths. At some points, waves with similar wavelength 'join' together upon the CD. As a result, these points will be bright in the colour corresponding to the particular wavelength. Since, the CD surface contains a large number of reflecting circular planes, scattering will be high, and all the seven colours get reflected at one place or the other. The total effect produces VIBGYOR (the seven colours) on the CD.



● **Alwin George**

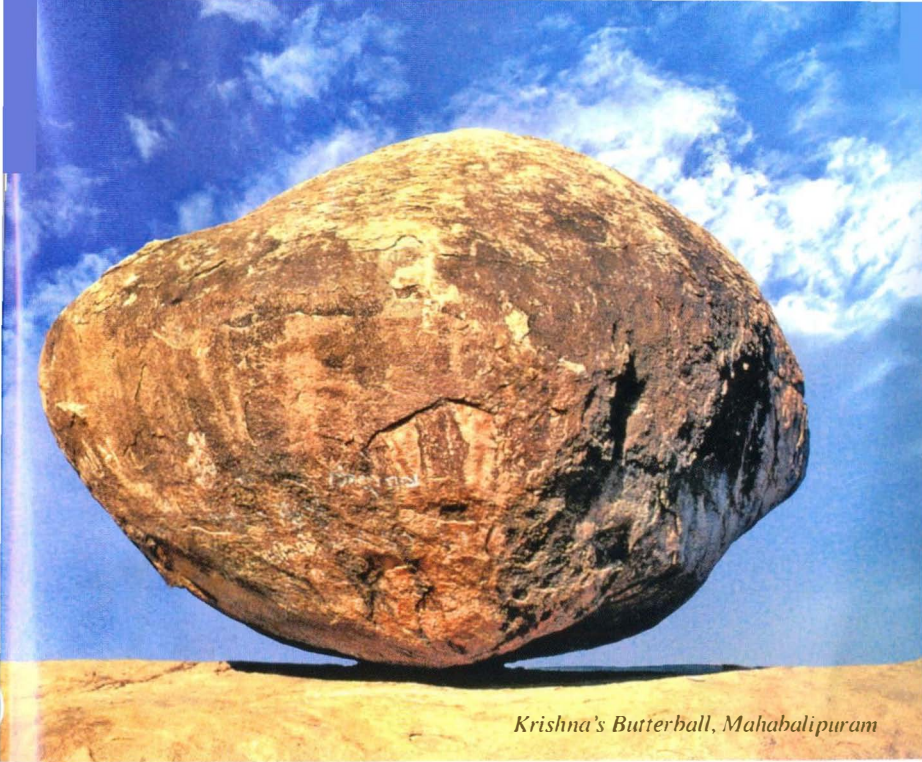
MANORAMA TELL ME WHY - HERITAGE SITES IN INDIA

Editor: Ammu Mathew

Editor-in-Charge: N.M. Mohanan*

Printed and Published by V. Sajeew George, on behalf of M.M. Publications Ltd, P.B. No. 226, Kottayam - 686 001 at M.M. Publications Ltd, P.B. No. 226, Kottayam - 686 001 and Malayala Manorama Press, Kottayam - 686 039 and published from M.M. Publications Ltd, P.B. No. 226, Kottayam - 686 001.

* Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act



Krishna's Butterball, Mahabalipuram

Sites likely to enter the UNESCO list next...

- Buddhist Monastery Complex, Alchi, Leh.
- Golconda Fort
- Dholavira: a Harappan City
- Rani-ki-Vav at Patan
- Mattanchery Palace
- Tomb of Sher Shah Suri
- Monuments at Mandu
- Buddhist Site at Sarnath
- Hemis Gompa
- Sri Harimandir Sahib
- River Island of Majuli
- The Matheran Light Railway
- Western Ghats
- Nandapha National Park
- Wild Ass Sanctuary, Little Rann of Kutch
- Kangchendzonga National Park
- Le Corbusier in Chandigarh
- The Kangra Valley Railway
- Churchgate - Extension to Mumbai CST
- The Maharaja Railways of India
- Oak Grove School
- Nalanda
- Great Himalayan National Park
- Bhitarkanika Conservation Area
- Neora Valley National Park
- Desert National Park
- Silk Road Sites in India
- Santiniketan
- Qutb Shahi Monuments of Hyderabad, Golconda Fort, Charminar
- Mughal Gardens in Kashmir
- Hill Forts of Rajasthan
- Historic city of Ahmedabad

July 2012 ₹20

KERENG/2006/18236

MANORAMA TELL ME WHY

ISSN 0975 - 0436

Registered Reg. No. KL/KTM/656/2010-12

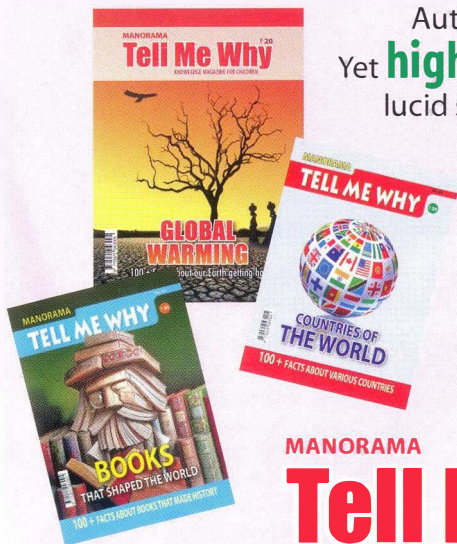
KL/CR/KTM/WPP-1/ 2010-12

Licensed to post without prepayment

School projects are going to be easy now...

Authentic and informative.

Yet **highly readable**, written in a
lucid style suitable for children.



The only book of its
kind at such an
**unbelievable
price!**

MANORAMA

Tell Me Why

KNOWLEDGE MAGAZINE
FOR CHILDREN

To subscribe to Tell Me Why online, logon to

www.manoramaonline.com/subscribe

For subscription enquiries: Please call
our toll-free number - **1800 4255 002**

(between 9 am & 5 pm on working days)